

Southern New Hampshire University

Theodore Roosevelt and the Native Americans

How his beliefs influenced his treatment of the Native Americans

A Capstone Project Submitted to the College of Online and Continuing Education in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Master of Arts in History

By

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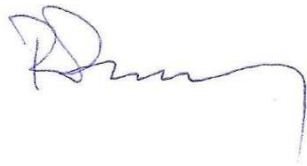
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## **Abstract**

In the attempt to characterize the historical character, Theodore Roosevelt historians have oversimplified the history and the character, leading to extreme perspectives. Some historians have written of him as a hero of the people, a progressive reformer who saved the less fortunate from the wealthy elitists. While other historians referred to him as a racist bent on expansionistic ideas to conquer the world in the name of the Anglo-Saxons. The present thesis accurately interprets Theodore Roosevelt and shows how his progressive ideals and his racist beliefs both originated from the same part of his character. Roosevelt's progressive ideals and his Anglo-Saxon superiority views led him to believe that his superior Anglo-Saxon race was destined to conquer and then educate the inferior races in self-government. His Native American policies and actions toward Native Americans present clear evidence of how Roosevelt's dual views came together to create this enigma of a historical character.

## **Dedication**

For my wife, Annissia and my boys, Wyatt and Logan who put up with me and all my stress while completing this project.

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### **Note on Terminology**

For ease of reading I have used the terms “Indians, Native Americans, and Natives interchangeably, as I have also used the terms “Teedie,” “Roosevelt,” and “Theodore Roosevelt” interchangeably.

## Introduction

In response to the great wealth and the great poverty of the Gilded Age rose the Progressive Era, which was between the 1890s and 1920s. During this time, Theodore Roosevelt came to prominence as a strong proponent of Progressivism. Contemporary historians have portrayed Roosevelt as either a champion of the people, who through reform policy acted against big business, or as others label him an imperialist and racist. Author Jack Beatty described Roosevelt as someone who "...championed an urban middle-class version of Populist reform, appealing to a mood and movement known as Progressivism."<sup>1</sup> While other historians have characterized him as a racist, such as James Bradley, in his book *The Imperial Cruise*. Bradley stated, "...Theodore had imbibed the Aryan myth."<sup>2</sup> Bradley further explained how Roosevelt's education included how Americans were the final part of the Aryan/Teuton/Anglo-Saxon flow of civilization moving west from Germany, through England to America. "Then Roosevelt fashioned a winning political persona as a white male brave enough to vanquish lesser races."<sup>3</sup> In their attempts to characterize the historical character, Theodore Roosevelt, historians have oversimplified the history and the historical figure to create an extreme perspective of Roosevelt. One way or another, analysis shows that his progressive nature and his racist beliefs both come from the same part of his character. Roosevelt's Anglo-Saxon beliefs mixed with his religious beliefs and created a political character that thought a "superior" race was destined to conquer the world and parent those "inferior" races while educating them in culture and self-government.

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<sup>1</sup> Jack Beatty, *Age of Betrayal: The triumph of money in America, 1865-1900*, (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 2007), 377.

<sup>2</sup> James Bradley, *The Imperial Cruise: A Secret History of Empire and War*, (New York, NY: Back Bay Books, 2009), 34-35.

<sup>3</sup> Bradley, *The Imperial Cruise: A Secret History of Empire and War*, 34-35.

An examination of his Native American policy demonstrates how his two beliefs were two sides of the same coin.

Roosevelt, as a historical character, was a dynamic and charismatic leader who made sure he left a mark on the history of the United States. He is remembered for his negotiation of the treaty to end the Russo-Japanese War and his famous charge up San Juan Hill. Americans recall his square deal while governor of New York, which enabled fair dealings between business and workers. He is known for being the first conservation president, and for the building of the Panama Canal. Roosevelt's deeds were deemed, not only necessary, but also in line with Progressivism. But Roosevelt also believed in the dominance of what he called the "Anglo-American" superiority, a belief developed as a young boy from his father and his time studying in Germany. The belief developed further while Roosevelt attended Harvard and Columbia Law School. As Evan Thomas describes in his book *The War Lovers: Roosevelt, Lodge, Hearst, and The Rush to Empire 1898*, Roosevelt's education at "...Harvard was a hotbed of eugenics...Harvard scholars were sure that Anglo-Saxons had emerged as the master race over the centuries that followed."<sup>4</sup> His education in racism came through in Roosevelt's own book *The Winning of the West: From the Alleghenies to the Mississippi* in which he described "The English race, on the contrary, has a perfectly continuous history." Roosevelt went on to describe how the "...sea-rovers who won England to a great extent actually displaced the native Britons" and then either "...slew or drove off or assimilated the original inhabitants."<sup>5</sup> Roosevelt clearly

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<sup>4</sup> Evan Thomas, *The War Lovers: Roosevelt, Lodge, Hearst, and the Rush to Empire, 1898*, (New York, NY: Back Bay Books, 2010), 43.

<sup>5</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West: From the Alleghenies to the Mississippi*, (Skyhorse Publishing, May 2015), 34. Accessed on Sept. 13, 2017. <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.snhu.edu/lib/snhu-ebooks/reader.action?docID=1885178#>

described how those “inferior” races were to be eliminated, driven off, or assimilated into the dominant and “superior” race that expanded across the world.

It was Roosevelt’s belief in a dominant race, one that would conquer “inferior” races and then prepare those “inferior” races for self-government, which set the groundwork for his push against immigration, drive to spread into Central America and across the Pacific Ocean, and his treatment of Native Americans. Roosevelt called on Anglo-Saxon women in America to have more children to offset the immigrants entering the country.<sup>6</sup> His belief in a “superior” race’s responsibility to teach lower races was his reason for support of the Spanish-American War in Cuba and the Philippines. Roosevelt’s Anglo-Saxon Superiority belief was his justification for the treatment of Native Americans in America. Theodore Roosevelt’s actions against the Native Americans were an extension of his progressive reform beliefs which led him to support Imperialism. It was the leader’s duty to take care of not only those less fortunate within the country, but to also take care of those “inferior” races around the world, including their neighbors that they had recently liberated to the nation’s south.

Theodore Roosevelt’s actions against the Native Americans revealed that he wanted to help, but they also were an extension of his preconceived ideas about Native Americans’ capabilities and their need for a complete cultural overhaul as their way of life did not fit into his beliefs about his “superior” Anglo-American culture. Roosevelt justified the treatment of Native Americans by the U.S. government and white Americans through his belief that Native Americans were “inferior” both in their style of culture and style of government. Roosevelt’s own words as well as evidence from other historians proved Roosevelt believed Native

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<sup>6</sup> Thomas, *The War Lovers: Roosevelt, Lodge, Hearst, and the Rush to Empire*, 44.

Americans were “inferior”. It was not just racism, but also cultural superiority that infiltrated his progressive views and drove Roosevelt to believe Native Americans that did not choose assimilation were to be moved aside while white America spread and developed the entire continent. He believed that it was the job of the “superior” race to educate the Natives, also known as assimilation, or to protect those that refused to assimilate, as they were not just an “inferior” race, but also a race which was culturally far behind his Anglo-American “superior” race.

There is much evidence to support that the Anglo-Saxon and Teutonic racist beliefs were taught to Roosevelt while he was a child in Germany and then later when he attended Harvard and Columbia Law School. The evidence supports that Roosevelt may not have pushed the Anglo-Saxon or Aryan racist beliefs; however, he did support what he called the Anglo-American Spirit of conquest. The idea that Anglo-Saxons had spread to America and conquered all they encountered to become the “superior” race was where Roosevelt agreed with his professors, but after that, Roosevelt’s beliefs diverged. He believed that it was the Anglo-Americans’ right to conquer the “inferior” Natives as they moved westward, as pioneers, across the entire continent. If the Native Americans assimilated into Anglo-American society, accepted the concept of private land ownership and became citizens, then their blood would be added to Roosevelt’s Anglo-American “superior” race. However, if they chose not to assimilate, then it is the responsibility of the “superior” race to protect them, and that meant living separated from the whites that had exploited the Natives’ ignorance. Roosevelt’s beliefs and his policies in general would justify the expansion of the Anglo-Americans into other “inferior” races.

Roosevelt’s Anglo-Americans sailed across the Pacific Ocean where they conquered all they encountered and then educated them in self-government, as was done in Hawaii and the

Philippines. The Hawaiians argued that their system of self-government through their queen was a legitimate form of government. As Roosevelt stated, in his State of the Union Address in 1901, “Our earnest effort is to help these people upward along the stony and difficult path that leads to self-government.” A little later in the address he added, “What has taken us thirty generations to achieve, we cannot expect to have another race accomplish out of hand, especially when large portions of that race start very far behind the point which our ancestors had reached even thirty generations ago.”<sup>7</sup> Roosevelt believed it was the duty of the Anglo-Americans to educate those “inferior” races on self-government and eventually, those conquered would be able to rule over themselves.

The evidence of other historians and Roosevelt’s speeches confirm Roosevelt believed that the Native Americans needed to assimilate to “white” ways or they were to be moved out of the way. Roosevelt felt Natives could be educated in the “correct” way to live and then they could achieve citizenship and no longer be a separate and “weaker” people living within the borders of the United States. While other historians have presented evidence that Roosevelt believed Native Americans to be “inferior” to the Anglo-American race, many fail to focus on Native Americans’ treatment, often presenting them only as a side note. Some historians have presented his Anglo-American views as what led to his push for war and his push for expansion. While they mentioned Roosevelt’s belief that Native Americans were “inferior”, they did not dedicate much of their work to describe the treatment of Native Americans. His treatment of Native Americans was only slightly mentioned on the way to proving their bigger thesis, that Roosevelt was an expansionist with a desire to conquer, as James Bradley described in *Imperial*

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<sup>7</sup> “State of the Union Address Part II,” Teaching American History, 2017. Accessed December 10, 2017. <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/state-of-the-union-address-part-ii-8/>.

*Cruise*, or as a war lover who felt Americans were losing their pioneer spirit and needed another war to keep the people alert as reported by Evan Thomas in *War Lovers*. This thesis will address the treatment of the Native Americans and how they fit into Roosevelt's race views.

Still other historians viewed Roosevelt as the hero that freed the Cubans or negotiated peace while bringing big business under control. Historians described Roosevelt as a protector of Native Americans citing his plan to make Native Americans citizens of the United States if they assimilated, but most analysis failed to reference the fact that Native Americans did not want to assimilate and give up their ways to become Americans. Roosevelt's actions should be viewed as another step in the Progressive Movement, the imperialist belief that the "superior" race knew what was best for the "inferior" race and had a duty to act on that knowledge. He wanted Native Americans to be educated so they would become part of the Anglo-American people. Roosevelt believed Native Americans could be educated to learn "white" ways and become citizens, except, he never asked the natives if that was what they wanted. It was presumptuous for Roosevelt to believe he knew the best form of culture, and then it was cultural genocide to eliminate the Native Americans' culture and force them to be American citizens.

Roosevelt did some important things for the United States, including making many decisions not because they were in-line with his party, but because he felt it was what the country needed. His beliefs about "inferior" races and how they needed the "superior" Anglo race to educate them in self-government, over many generations, as the Anglos had been taught, falls short of "the hero stature," which some historians have argued in the past. While his belief in the Anglo race in America had changed because of the successful incorporation of other races into American culture, that successful incorporation served to prove that when given direction, the "inferior" races could learn and become part of the "superior" race. The change in his beliefs

shows that, although in contemporary views, he would be a racist, Roosevelt was keeping in line with his progressive beliefs of taking care of those “inferior” races by forced indoctrination of Native Americans into American culture. Roosevelt also departed from strict Social Darwinism in favor of Progressivism through this new belief that people could be “improved.”

The contemporary implications of this research show the cultural, political, and social views of Theodore Roosevelt and the difference between his view of assimilating Natives and the contemporary view that acceptance of Native Americans’ ways of life is more important. The research will show Roosevelt to have kept in line with the Progressive Movement through all his actions and treatment of Native Americans, and therefore, will provide unification to the historiographical portrayal of Roosevelt in a significant way.



## Chapter 1: Roosevelt's Anglo-Saxon Education

Theodore Roosevelt's early life, studies in Germany, and college education produced the two threads of thinking that have led historians to record him as the progressive reformer that fought for those unable to fight for themselves or to vilify him as the racist imperialist. It was during his development and education that the two threads of thinking combined to form his sense of responsibility and his sense of superiority. Theodore Roosevelt is remembered as the strong historical character because of the combination created by those two major parts of his personality. The decisions made by Roosevelt later in his political career are directly connected to his belief in the superior race's responsibility to lead and take care of those less fortunate beings in their care.

As a child, the first influence in Roosevelt's life was his father, Theodore Roosevelt Senior. Roosevelt Senior believed in the importance of being physically fit and was fit himself. As Edmund Morris described in his book *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*, Roosevelt Senior was strong and powerful: "The word 'power' runs like a leitmotif through other descriptions of Theodore Senior: he was a person of inexorable drive. He took an exuberant, masculine joy in life...exercising with the energy of a teenager, waltzing all night long at society balls."<sup>1</sup> According to Morris, Theodore Roosevelt, known in his youth as Teedie, referred to his father as "the best man I ever knew."<sup>2</sup> Teedie grew up adoring his father's "masculine virility" and viewed his own physical flaws as a weakness. According to Joshua David Hawley, in his book *Theodore Roosevelt: Preacher of Righteousness*, "The younger Roosevelt was a notoriously sickly child, plagued by asthma, poor eyesight, recurring headaches, diarrhea, fevers and bad

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<sup>1</sup> Edmund Morris, *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*, (New York: The Modern Library, 2001), 5.

<sup>2</sup> Morris, *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*, 5.

dreams, among other things...Yearn as he might to please his father and join him in his world, the path to Roosevelt manhood was closed to Teedie so long as physical fitness was the entrance fee.”<sup>3</sup> Teedie desired to be the strong masculine character of his father.

Roosevelt Senior also taught young Teedie the importance of responsibility and duty to others. It was through religion that Teedie learned the emphasis on service along with living a moral life. According to Joshua David Hawley, Roosevelt strove to accomplish what his father had taught him about living right, which entailed an emphasis on service to others and high moral standards through his faith. Teedie would reject any childhood friends who did not live up to his high standards. While attending Harvard he avoided smoking, drinking to excess, and prostitution.<sup>4</sup> The education in moral righteousness instilled in Teedie his sense of responsibility in the service of others. When he entered politics and became a leader in the United States, Teedie’s sense of responsibility served as the catalyst for educating Native Americans, immigrants, non-Anglo-Americans, Asians, and those he helped to free in Central and South America. Teedie felt it necessary to help those learn to help themselves as he had done to overcome his ailments as a youth.

Teedie suffered from asthma attacks, which affected his ability to attend school and partially led to his unorthodox education. As Hawley described, Teedie had no formal education before the age of thirteen; “...his instructors were his parents, his books, his travels and cultural milieu, and, after his thirteenth birthday, a series of private tutors handpicked by his father.”<sup>5</sup> It was his father’s beliefs that would shape the man Teedie would strive to become. In his desire to

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<sup>3</sup> Joshua David Hawley, *Theodore Roosevelt: Preacher of Righteousness*, New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2008, 6. *eBook Collection (EBSCOhost)*, EBSCOhost, Accessed September 20, 20017.

<sup>4</sup> Hawley, *Theodore Roosevelt: Preacher of Righteousness*, 14.

<sup>5</sup> Hawley, *Theodore Roosevelt: Preacher of Righteousness*, 3.

become the physically masculine idol of his father, whom he emulated, and due to his afflictions, which limited his physical exertions Teedie, turned to stories of outdoor action in Morris “...which he could identify with heroes larger than life: the novels of Ballantyne, the sea-yarns of Captain Marryat, Cooper’s tales of the American frontier.” Morris also quoted Roosevelt himself: “I felt great admiration for men who were fearless and could hold their own in the world, and I had a great desire to be like them.”<sup>6</sup> It was through his choice in novels as a child that Teedie developed his belief in the importance of physical abilities and the American Spirit as pioneers settling the untamed west. Through his novels, Teedie also learned the idea of inferior races.

The novels Teedie read taught him the idea that certain races were strong while others were inferior. As Hawley described, “These authors frequently described their fictional characters according to ‘racial type,’ and made their personalities embody particular racial ideals.”<sup>7</sup> In those stories the authors portrayed the Saxon as the strong protagonist, while the Native Americans were fierce dangerous antagonists. These early lessons for Teedie helped to shape his view that not only was there a stronger race, but that the stronger race needed to conquer lesser races to save them from themselves. The religious ideals of Roosevelt Senior taught Teedie to be devout and to be philanthropic and give to those in need. The ideal of offering aid to the needy was shaped alongside the idea of inferior races, so the natural connection Teedie made was to instruct those inferior races on how to be civilized just as he had trained his own weak body to be strong. These views of Teedie’s showed themselves later in Theodore Roosevelt the Progressive Republican politician.

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<sup>6</sup> Morris, *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt* ,16.

<sup>7</sup> Hawley, *Theodore Roosevelt: Preacher of Righteousness*, 23.



**Figure 1: Theodore Roosevelt and Theodore Roosevelt Jr.<sup>8</sup>**

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<sup>8</sup> *Theodore Roosevelt and Theodore Roosevelt Jr.*, (1890-1891?), Prints and Photographs division. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division. <http://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/Research/Digital-Library/Record?libID=0281719>. Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library. Dickinson State University

Teedie's beliefs received another supportive push when he read Darwin's *Origins of Species* at the age of fourteen. Throughout his youth Teedie was exposed to race discussions from many different angles, though all described physical strength as the determining factor. As Hawley described, "Race talk composed the intellectual white noise of Teedie Roosevelt's youth. The editors at *Our Young Folks* gave tips on good posture to develop good physiques because health and vitality were thought to be synonymous with racial strength." Hawley also discussed how Teedie digested *Origin of Species* and decided Darwin was correct about the formation of races.<sup>9</sup> The Roosevelts went on a tour of Europe where they spent the summer in Germany. While in Germany Teedie spent many days suffering from different ailments like the mumps and many attacks from asthma. In a letter to his father Teedie mentioned how "During the last month, I have scarcely been entirely free of the asthma for one week, and today it is rather worse than usual."<sup>10</sup> It was while Teedie suffered from asthma or other ailments that he turned to books and lessons. Teedie continued in his letter to his father about how his "...sicknesses put me back in my studies a good deal..." and he closed the letter by mentioning "...I can read my natural histories well enough to have a great deal of enjoyment out of them."<sup>11</sup> To impress his father, young Teedie would work harder at learning when he was unable to be physically active. Teedie even attached a letter to his father composed in German to show how well he was doing in learning the language while studying in Germany.

It was while in Germany that Teedie read German novels in their native tongue. The German novels described the Teutonic race as the superior race which did not mix with other

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<sup>9</sup> Hawley, *Theodore Roosevelt: Preacher of Righteousness*, 26-27.

<sup>10</sup> *Letter from Theodore Roosevelt to Theodore Roosevelt*, July 20, 1873. Theodore Roosevelt Collection. MS Am 1785.2 (114A). Harvard College Library. Accessed December 19, 2017. <http://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/Research/Digital-Library/Record?libID=028757>.

<sup>11</sup> *Letter from Theodore Roosevelt to Theodore Roosevelt*, July 20, 1873.

racess as the Romans had and remained pure throughout. According to Hawley, “This theme of Teutonic, or sometimes Nordic, racial superiority was reprised by scientists, anthropologists, and social theorists of the period...argued that what had become the English-speaking race stood head and shoulders above any other in its physical purity, its political and artistic achievements, its religion.”<sup>12</sup> Teedie formed from his voracious reading as a youth his beliefs about the Anglo-Saxon race being superior, and then solidified these beliefs while in college.

Roosevelt finalized his education about the Anglo-Saxon racial superiority from Nathaniel Shaler and Francis Parkman, two professors at Harvard. Hawley discussed how Nathaniel Shaler held that, although humans evolved from a single common ancestor, it was so far in the distant past that all the races developed distinct differences in their moral characteristics as they evolved from primate to contemporary man. “Shaler regarded separate races as separate human species, not to be intermixed or bred.”<sup>13</sup> It was Shaler’s lessons to Roosevelt that gave credit to his beliefs begun in his youth. Shaler also influenced Roosevelt’s beliefs of the Native Americans and how inevitable it was that Anglo-Saxons would rule over them. “As for the American Indians, Shaler wrote that they had failed to progress beyond the lowest levels of barbarism...”<sup>14</sup> Shaler’s main points were that the Native Americans had no language or legal system, so they had not developed as their Anglo-Saxon conquerors, and therefore they were inferior. Roosevelt would incorporate Shaler’s ideas into his beliefs on the inevitability of inferior races being over taken by the superior Anglo-Saxon race.

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<sup>12</sup> Hawley, *Theodore Roosevelt: Preacher of Righteousness*, 28.

<sup>13</sup> Hawley, *Theodore Roosevelt: Preacher of Righteousness*, 36-37.

<sup>14</sup> Hawley, *Theodore Roosevelt: Preacher of Righteousness*, 39.

It was John W. Burgess, a professor at Columbia, who also gave Roosevelt's beliefs justification as he educated Roosevelt in racial superiority. As Thomas F. Gossett discussed in his book *Race: The History of an Idea in America*, it was Burgess that argued, "Only the Teutonic races had been imbued with the ability to build stable governments."<sup>15</sup> Gossett further explained how the Teutonic race spread into England as the Anglo-Saxon race and then eventually spread to and formed the United States of America. Then it was the Germans who immigrated to America and mixed back with the Anglo-Saxon race that enabled America to create Constitutional government. Gossett claimed other races remained in a state of barbarism and needed the Teutonic race to rule over them and educate them on the organization of government.<sup>16</sup> Gossett even gave justification of force: "The civilized state thus may righteously go still further than the exercise of force in imposing organization."<sup>17</sup> Roosevelt learned from Burgess that it was his duty as a civilized Teutonic race descendant to educate the barbarous races in self-government.

Roosevelt's education of racial superiority and racial inferiority became his beliefs which were expressed in his own written work, *The Wining of the West: From the Alleghenies to the Mississippi*. Roosevelt discussed how the Teutonic race was almost merged into the Roman power, until the sacking of Rome at which time the Teutonic race moved from the defensive outward to become the conquerors of Europe. Eventually the Teutonic race moved into many parts of Europe but became lost in the overwhelmingly mass of those they conquered. However, by infusing their blood into those races they conquered, they made those races stronger. The

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<sup>15</sup> Thomas F. Gossett, *Race: The History of an Idea in America*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1997, 112. ProQuest Ebook Central, Accessed on September 13, 2017. <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.snhu.edu/lib/snhu-ebooks/detail.action?docID=241567>.

<sup>16</sup> Gossett, *Race: The History of an Idea in America*, 111-113.

<sup>17</sup> Gossett, *Race: The History of an Idea in America*, 113.

areas in which the Teutonic race did not become lost, but instead rose to lead were in the northern areas of the Dutch and British.<sup>18</sup> Roosevelt described how the Teutonic race, through England, moved to control the world, “Yet the rule and the race of the Goth, Frank, and Burgund have vanished from off the earth; while the sons of the unknown Saxon, Anglian, and Friesic warriors now hold in their hands the fate of the coming years.”<sup>19</sup> The connection Roosevelt made was that the Teutonic race had incorporated the English race to become the Anglo-Saxon race. Therefore, the Anglo-Saxons were around longer than the other Europeans that they were in competition with when the Americas were being colonized.

Roosevelt then focused on proving the other European nations were much younger than England and the Anglo-Saxons. He pointed out that the other nations of Europe, “...the so-called Latin nations—the French and Spaniards...”<sup>20</sup> did not begin their national history until they began to colonize the Americas. The Germanic peoples’ history, however, stretched back to the time when the Teutonic race had first existed. He also was quick to point out that areas like Gaul and Iberia were of mixed races as they were conquered by the Romans, the Franks, and the Visigoths who then mixed blood, languages, and governments. The Teutonic race had conquered across the north of Europe onto the English Isles where they established the English language and government as it came from Germanic roots.<sup>21</sup> This was how Roosevelt set up the connection to the Anglo-Saxons crossing the Atlantic Ocean and conquering the people of America.

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<sup>18</sup> Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West: From the Alleghenies to the Mississippi*, 30-32.

<sup>19</sup> Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West: From the Alleghenies to the Mississippi*, 33.

<sup>20</sup> Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West: From the Alleghenies to the Mississippi*, 33.

<sup>21</sup> Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West: From the Alleghenies to the Mississippi*, 33-34.



Roosevelt's argument also include how the Anglo-Saxons moved here and then mixed again with the German immigrants as they came to America, again combining the Teutonic blood to strengthen the race. According to Roosevelt, "The English had exterminated or assimilated the Celts of Britain, and they substantially repeated the process with the Indians of America; although of course in America there was very little, instead of very much, assimilation."<sup>22</sup> He then discussed how the Spanish occupation in the Americas formed similarly to the Roman occupation in southern Europe: small numbers settled in among larger populations of natives and then mixed with them weakening their blood lines. Roosevelt was also quick to point out that the English did very little mixing with the Natives and thus kept their blood lines strong.<sup>23</sup> Roosevelt concluded that the Americans were descendants of the English, who were descendants of the Germans; therefore, the Teutonic race was strong in the blood of Anglo-Americans.

Roosevelt's book showed what he learned both as a child in Germany and as a student attending Harvard and Columbia. It was important for him to connect the Americans to the Teutonic race through England for the blood line as well as to show the way Germanic peoples had moved across northern Europe conquering and assimilating those tribes as they went. It was through his connection to Germanic peoples that he connected America, to the long history of Germany and the justification Americans had for spreading across the continent, assimilating or exterminating Native Americans as they took over the land. The connection also allowed him to incorporate the renewed connection to the Germanic peoples as the immigrants from Germany mixed with the Anglo-Saxons. It is the mixing of the Anglo-Saxon with the Germanic in

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<sup>22</sup> Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West: From the Alleghenies to the Mississippi*, 39.

<sup>23</sup> Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West: From the Alleghenies to the Mississippi*, 39-41.

America that allowed him to present his stronger race of Anglo-Americans. And therefore, Roosevelt's formative years clearly formed his approach to Native American policy in a powerful way. It's as if he was re-imaging Native Americans as the Celts in England who were conquered and assimilated.

## Chapter 2: Roosevelt the Progressive Reformer

Theodore Roosevelt was a Progressive Reformer right from the beginning of his political career, and his views came directly from his childhood education and from his college education. His father taught him through Christianity the act of piety, which led to his actions: against corruption while in the New York State Legislature, as a member on the Civil Service Commission, as the New York City Police Commissioner, and as President of the United States. It was his belief that members of the superior Anglo-American race and those in a position of leadership have a responsibility to act on behalf of those they represent. His beliefs also inspired his conviction that he had a duty to take care of the inferior groups within the different areas he represented over his life.

Roosevelt was born into a wealthy family in New York. He was taught the importance of piety and righteous by his father, through religion.<sup>1</sup> The teachings of his father would be a value to Roosevelt as he entered the realm of public service. He viewed it as the responsibility of those in power to make decisions for those that chose them as leaders based on morals and for the greater good of society, not to benefit themselves. Roosevelt's actions while a politician show he lived by the values instilled in him by his father, which supported his reputation as a Progressive Reformer. Roosevelt helped to pass both a bill to stop the making of cigars in tenement-houses and the Civil Service Reform Bill in the State Legislature of New York, sought to end the spoils system while serving on the Civil Service Commission, put an end to corruption as New York City Police Commissioner, and was responsible for many reform policies while President of the United States.

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<sup>1</sup> Joshua David Hawley, *Theodore Roosevelt: Preacher of Righteousness*, New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2008, 3. *eBook Collection (EBSCOhost)*, EBSCOhost, Accessed September 20, 2017.

While Roosevelt was a member of the New York State Legislature, he saw it as his duty to fight against the corruption of the political system to better represent the citizens of New York. His belief was that members of government should have strong moral character and be able to work to accomplish legislation to govern through that moral character. He discussed how a major problem in government was that corrupt men were able to efficiently accomplish their goals while the just men were inefficient. Roosevelt presented these ideas in his autobiography:

If efficiency is left solely to bad men, and if virtue is confined solely to inefficient men, the result cannot be happy. When I entered politics there were, as there always had been—and as there always will be—any number of bad men in politics who were thoroughly efficient, and any number of good men who would like to have done lofty things in politics but who were thoroughly inefficient. If I wished to accomplish anything for the country, my business was to combine the decency and efficiency; to be a thoroughly practical man of high ideals who did his best to reduce those ideals to actual practice.<sup>2</sup>

As Roosevelt saw it, he would have to combine his moral character and efficiency to lead the government and those represented by the government in the best possible direction. The government would have to act in the best interest of the people and at times take care of those too weak to care for themselves. While in the state legislature, Roosevelt served on a committee which presented him with the opportunity to accomplish his lofty goal for the cigar manufacturers' tenement-housing.

He championed for the passage of a bill to stop the manufacturing of cigars in tenement-housing as the conditions created within those houses were horrible. As Roosevelt stated in his autobiography about the conditions he witnessed when visiting the tenement-house districts, "...the work of manufacturing the tobacco by men, women, and children went on day and night

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<sup>2</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, *Theodore Roosevelt: An Autobiography*, (Auckland: The Floating Press, 2014), 95. Accessed Jan. 5, 2018. <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.snhu.edu/lib/snhu-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1706584>.

in the eating, living, and sleeping rooms—sometimes in one room...The tobacco was stowed about everywhere, alongside the foul bedding, and in a corner where there were scraps of food.”<sup>3</sup> Roosevelt also discussed how the conditions made it difficult for the immigrant families to become active citizens of the United States. “These conditions rendered it impossible for the families of the tenement-house workers to live so that the children might grow up fitted for the exacting duties of American citizenship.”<sup>4</sup> Here Roosevelt’s description showed his concern for immigrants’ ability to raise children to become active citizens of the United States, or as Roosevelt, believed members of his superior Anglo-American race. Even though eventually this bill was overturned in the courts, it showed Roosevelt’s concern for raising strong Anglo-American citizens and his reform mindedness early in his political career.

Roosevelt’s greatest achievement while in the New York State Legislature was the New York City Civil Service Reform Bill to end the bribing of elected officials for special consideration for civil positions. As Roosevelt stated in his speech to the New York Assembly on April 9, 1883, “It is a good thing to raise the character of our public employees, but it is better still to take out of politics the vast band of hired mercenaries whose very existence depends on their success...existing only for their own selfish interests, is a standing menace to our free institutions...”<sup>5</sup> His intentions were clear in his speech to the assembly: the practice of giving government jobs in payment for support during an election had led the government of New York City to no longer act in the best interest of the people living in New York City, but rather act in the best interest of those who controlled the government jobs. Roosevelt again acted in a way

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<sup>3</sup> Roosevelt, *Theodore Roosevelt: An Autobiography*, 87.

<sup>4</sup> Roosevelt, *Theodore Roosevelt: An Autobiography*, 87.

<sup>5</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, “The New York Civil Service Reform Bill,” *Almanac of Theodore Roosevelt -Complete Speeches of Theodore Roosevelt – Teddy Roosevelt*. Accessed Jan. 6, 2018. <http://www.theodore-roosevelt.com/images/research/txtspeeches/555.pdf>

that helped those who could not help themselves. His reform ideas on government in New York brought him to Washington D. C. to become part of the Civil Service Commission in 1889.

During Roosevelt's tenure in the Civil Service Commission his goal was for Civil Service Reform and he spoke out for the merit system over the spoils system. The goals of Civil Service Reform, according to Edmund Morris in his book, *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*, were "...to restore to the government's three fundamental principles of American democracy: first, that opportunity be made equal to all citizens; second, that the meritorious only be appointed; third, that no public servants should suffer for their political beliefs."<sup>6</sup> The reform goal for civil service was supported by Roosevelt as he believed that the merit system was the way to keep corruption out of government. As Roosevelt discussed in his autobiography, "There was, first, the effort to secure a more efficient administration of the public service, and, second, the even more important effort to withdraw the administrative offices of the Government from the domain of spoils politics, and thereby cut out of American political life a fruitful source of corruption and degradation."<sup>7</sup> Roosevelt saw his appointment to the commission as an opportunity to rid government of the corruption created by the patronage system.

Roosevelt viewed the patronage system as a major problem with the government of the United States and, as a reformer, felt a system based on merit would serve to bring the best candidates for public jobs. In an article in *The Century Magazine*, he discussed the problems of the patronage system and those who have benefitted from the patronage system. He discussed those who favored the

"...old spoils system...for they include every place-mongering big politician and every place-hunting small politician in the land, not to speak of the malodorous

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<sup>6</sup> Edmund Morris, *The rise of Theodore Roosevelt*, (New York: The Modern Library, 2001), 405.

<sup>7</sup> Roosevelt, *Theodore Roosevelt: An Autobiography*, 138.

tribe of political hangers-on, who are too lazy to do honest work, and who know very well that if tried by the standard of merit alone they would no longer have the faintest chance of getting easy jobs at the public expense.”<sup>8</sup>

Clearly, Roosevelt felt those who were in positions of civil service under the patronage system were not qualified for those positions in any way.

Roosevelt, in this same article, also discussed answers to all those who had spoken out against the merit system. He discussed how the questions on the tests for positions were not irrelevant or impractical, such as, who they voted for in the last election or with which party they were affiliated, as the opposition had stated. He mentioned the questions would test to see that the applicant had knowledge based in the position he/she had applied, like “A copyist or a clerk must be able to spell well and make grammatical sentences, he must write a good hand and be able to copy from a rough draft or dictation.”<sup>9</sup> He went on to discuss how a railway-mail clerk would need to show an understanding of the route he would be serving. Roosevelt finished the article with a statement about how the areas where the civil service law had been used had created the most “...conspicuous examples of honest and efficient administration of the public business.”<sup>10</sup> His defense of the merit system showed his commitment to reform, especially with regards to the civil service jobs within government. His beliefs in progressive reform and racial superiority pushed him to require that only qualified people be placed in positions of responsibility to the public. He would make use of both of his beliefs while New York City Police Commissioner.

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<sup>8</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, “The Merit System Versus the Patronage System, by Theodore Roosevelt,” *The Century Magazine*, The Unz Review, 628. Accessed Jan. 6, 2018. <http://www.unz.com/print/Centruy-1890feb-00628/>.

<sup>9</sup> Roosevelt, “The Merit System Versus the Patronage System, by Theodore Roosevelt,” 632-633.

<sup>10</sup> Roosevelt, “The Merit System Versus the Patronage System, by Theodore Roosevelt,” 633.

Roosevelt became the New York City Police Commissioner in 1895 and set out to clean up New York City's police department and the tenement-housing conditions. Roosevelt brought his successes from the Civil Service Commission with him and carried on the goals he created while serving in Washington D. C. He sought to end the notorious corruption of appointments, promotions, and actions of the New York City Police Department. Roosevelt described the appointments to his police force: "We paid not the slightest attention to a man's politics or creed, or where he was born, so long as he was an American citizen; and on the average, we obtained far and away the best men that had ever come into the Police Department."<sup>11</sup> The corruption of the Police Department was affected by the men chosen to perform their duties for the protection of the people of New York City. If the right men were chosen to protect the city, then corruption would not be a problem and the citizens of the city would feel protected and safe in their property. Property was another area that Roosevelt saw the weak being taken advantage of by the wealthy.

It was during his midnight walks around the City of New York while he was inspecting the police stations that he also inspected the tenement-housing. Roosevelt described in his autobiography the overcrowded conditions he witnessed: "Much of it was heartbreaking, especially the gasping misery of the little children and the worn-out mothers."<sup>12</sup> Roosevelt understood who was to blame for the conditions he witnessed on his midnight walks through the city, the wealthy and their lawyers.

My experience in the Police Department taught me that not a few of the worst tenement-houses were owned by wealthy individuals, who hired the best and most expensive lawyers to persuade the courts that it was "unconstitutional" to insist on the betterment of conditions...After my experience with them I became more set

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<sup>11</sup> Roosevelt, *Theodore Roosevelt: An Autobiography*, 185.

<sup>12</sup> Roosevelt, *Theodore Roosevelt: An Autobiography*, 214.



than ever in my distrust of those men, whether business men or lawyers, judges, legislators, or executive officers, who seek to make the Constitution a fetish for the prevention of the work of social reform, for the prevention of work in the interest of those men, women, and children on whose behalf we should be at liberty to employ freely every governmental agency.<sup>13</sup>

Roosevelt felt those wealthy men had made use of the Constitution to benefit themselves at the expense of their workforce and the underprivileged; the corruption of the wealthy left them morally unfit for the ideal of American society Roosevelt held so dear. Those of power and wealth had a responsibility to those less fortunate in a society to protect and not abuse their power; this would become a major goal for Roosevelt when he became President of the United States.

Roosevelt advanced to the office of the President of the United States with the assassination of President McKinley in 1901 and then was officially elected President of the United States in 1904. President Roosevelt's actions and words showed his progressive reform and Anglo-American beliefs. In his first year as President of the United States Roosevelt spoke at the Minnesota State Fair of legislation to help protect the workers from the unscrupulous owners who would only act in the correct manner toward its workforce when the government threatened them.<sup>14</sup> He supported workers when it was clear threats they were treated unjustly or if there was a clear threat to the nation. A clear threat to the nation, as Roosevelt saw it, were the railroad shipping rates, pure-food-and-drug legislation, and child labor practices.

President Roosevelt pushed legislation through Congress, that would reform the economy of the United States starting with railroad regulation. According to Joshua David Hawley in his

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<sup>13</sup> Roosevelt, *Theodore Roosevelt: An Autobiography*, 215-216.

<sup>14</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, "National Duties," *Almanac of Theodore Roosevelt – Complete Speeches of Theodore Roosevelt – Teddy Roosevelt*, (Sept. 2, 1901) Accessed Jan. 7, 2018. <http://www.theodore-roosevelt.com/images/research/txtspeeches/678.pdf>

book, *Theodore Roosevelt Preacher of Righteousness*, Roosevelt's Interstate Commerce Commission was given the authority to set maximum shipping rates for the railroad when there was a dispute between the railroad and the shipper.<sup>15</sup> The ability of a federal organization like the Interstate Commerce Commission to set shipping rates when the two parties were involved in a dispute over the price was a big win for reform in the United States. Roosevelt himself had asked for legislation from Congress during his State of the Union Address in December of 1905 to handle the railroad rates regulation. Roosevelt asked Congress,

...the immediate and most pressing need, so far as legislation is concerned, is the enactment into law of some scheme to secure to the agents of the Government such supervision and regulation of the rates charged by the railroads of the country engage in interstate traffic as shall summarily and effectively prevent the imposition of unjust or unreasonable rates...such commission should be made unequivocally administrative. I do not believe in the Government interfering with private business more than is necessary.<sup>16</sup>

Roosevelt was sure to mention that the government should not interfere with private business unless necessary, as he wanted to be clear that the only time he felt the government should interfere with private business was for the security of the nation. As a reformer, he believed the government was supposed to take care of those who could not take care of themselves, but within capitalism so that private business still had control over the economy. Only when he felt the safety of the nation was in jeopardy did he believe the government needed to be involved with private business, like when there was a danger to the citizens' health.

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<sup>15</sup> Joshua David Hawley, *Theodore Roosevelt: Preacher of Righteousness*, New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2008, 160. *eBook Collection (EBSCOhost)*, EBSCOhost, Accessed September 20, 2017.

<sup>16</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, "State of the Union," *Almanac of Theodore Roosevelt – Complete Speeches of Theodore Roosevelt – Teddy Roosevelt*. Accessed Jan 7, 2018. <http://www.theodore-roosevelt.com/images/research/txtspeeches/174.txt>

In the case of the Meat Inspection Act and Pure Food and Drug Act, both passed in 1906, Roosevelt wanted to protect the Americans from consuming food that was misbranded or harmful for human consumption. He saw the conditions of the slaughter houses in Chicago, before Upton Sinclair's book, *The Jungle*, was released, and pushed Congress to create legislation for the government to oversee the preparation of food in the United States. The two acts gained even more support and eventually passed due to the nation's reaction to *The Jungle* after it was released in the United States. The conditions under which food was prepared for consumption in America became another progressive action by Roosevelt. He saw a situation where the American people were not being protected and decided the government needed to step in and protect them. Roosevelt also saw the need for protection of the natural resources of America from the industrial expansion.

Roosevelt also believed the government needed to protect natural resources for future generations. He wanted to protect the wildlife of the United States and protect the natural habitats of that wildlife. As Roosevelt described in his autobiography, "Even more important was the taking of steps to preserve from destruction beautiful and wonderful wild creatures whose existence was threatened by greed and wantonness."<sup>17</sup> He went on to describe the creation of national parks: Yellowstone, Crater Lake, Wind Cave, Platt, Sully Hill, and Mesa Verda.<sup>18</sup> Roosevelt believed that the land of United States needed to be protected from the impact of industry and needed to be areas of land where industry could not destroy for the sake of industrial expansion. Roosevelt's love for the open lands of the west as well as his belief that

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<sup>17</sup> Roosevelt, *Theodore Roosevelt: An Autobiography*, 452.

<sup>18</sup> Roosevelt, *Theodore Roosevelt: An Autobiography*, 452.

those who are superior should protect those who are inferior were at the heart of his actions when he created national parks in the United States.

The progressive actions taken by Roosevelt while he held all the different political positions during his life were a result of his beliefs learned as a child and in his studies during college. Mostly it was his father's teachings in Christianity and the act of piety that fueled his actions after entering the civil service as a politician. His view was that those who are superior and in leadership positions have a responsibility to act on behalf of those they rule over and in morally, just ways to ensure the protection of the nation. Roosevelt's beliefs in taking care of those inferior to his superior Anglo-American race led to his belief that he was responsible for all the inferior groups under his charge as a political leader for the rest of his life.



**Figure 2: President Roosevelt and Major Pitcher before Liberty Cap in Yellowstone Park<sup>19</sup>**

<sup>19</sup> *President Roosevelt and Major Pitcher before Liberty Cap – a long extinct geyser at Yellowstone Park.* Prints and Photographs division. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division. Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library Dickinson State University. Accessed Jan. 7, 2018. <http://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/Research/Digital-Library/Record?libID=o275140>

### Chapter 3: Roosevelt's Need to Protect the Inferior Natives

Roosevelt's beliefs and his moral character dictated that superior races have a responsibility to protect those inferior races, therefore, the Anglo-Americans had to protect Native Americans. The Native Americans were viewed as primitive, even savage, in the eyes of Anglo-Saxons or white Americans, including Roosevelt. The Native Americans were in the way as the Anglo-Americans settled the land to the west. The justification, used by the Anglo-Americans, for expansion across the continent and into the Caribbean was the Monroe Doctrine and the belief in Manifest Destiny. Due to his belief that Native Americans were an inferior race, Roosevelt saw it as the duty of the United States' government to protect and care for their inferior wards.

Roosevelt's racial beliefs, learned during his childhood and reaffirmed while in college, led him to believe that the Native Americans were inferior to the Anglo-Saxon race. His belief in Anglo-Saxon superiority also led to his determination that, as an inferior race, Native Americans were destined to be conquered by the stronger race and therefore, were in the way of progress. Roosevelt presented direct evidence of his beliefs about the Native Americans being inferior and how they needed to be dealt with severely. In his book, *The Winning of the West*, he directly stated:

But neither the white frontiersmen nor their red antagonists possessed "philosophic minds." They represented two stages of progress, ages apart; and it would have needed many centuries to bring the lower to the level of the higher. Both sides recognized the fact that their interests were incompatible; and that the question of their clashing rights had to be settled by the strong hand.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West: From the Alleghenies to the Mississippi*, (Skyhorse Publishing, May 2015), 1130. Accessed on Sept. 13, 2017. <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.snhu.edu/lib/snhu-ebooks/reader.action?docID=1885178#>.

His description of the Native Americans as antagonists showed his belief that the whites were in the right when they expanded to the west and the Natives were in the way. He also discussed how they needed many centuries to bring the lower inferior group to the higher superior group's level. He finished the discussion with a statement of the need for a strong hand to settle the dispute over rights, which showed his belief in a stronger people having the right to exert their will over a weaker people. His writing expressed his racial beliefs and his conviction that superior race was justified in forcing the inferior race to submit. Roosevelt would also add to his book his view of how mixing with the inferior race would affect the superior race.

Roosevelt expressed his belief in the inferiority of the Native Americans throughout his book, *The Winning of the West*, where he described the French inhabitants of the northwest area of Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio. He described how "The French inhabitants were in very many cases not of pure blood. The early settlements had been made by men only, by soldiers, traders, and trappers, who took Indian wives. They were not trammelled by the queer pride which makes a man of English stock unwilling to make a red-skinned woman his wife..."<sup>2</sup> Roosevelt found these mixed marriages between Frenchmen and Native women as a weakening of the race as there was a mixing of the blood.

Roosevelt continued to support his belief of the inferior nature of the mixed people under the French controlled land by discussing their farms. "Their farming implements were rude, their methods of cultivation simple and primitive, and they themselves were often lazy and improvident...but their fields often lay untilled, while the owners lolled in the sunshine smoking their pipes."<sup>3</sup> Roosevelt implied that the descendants of these people, who will later be relocated

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<sup>2</sup> Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West: From the Alleghenies to the Mississippi*, 64.

<sup>3</sup> Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West: From the Alleghenies to the Mississippi*, 65.

or eliminated by the Americans as they moved west, were inferior and as such were destined to lose their land.

It is clear by Roosevelt's descriptions that he viewed Native Americans as an inferior race. He also made it clear that mixing the inferior French blood with the Native blood did not bring the Natives further along toward civility. Describing the French and Native Americans as too lazy to work their fields, instead lolling around smoking pipes painted a vivid picture, through stereotypes, of Roosevelt's feelings toward those groups in the American northwest immediately after the American Revolution and how inferior they were to the Americans. The description fits in line with the belief that only the strong Americans who tamed the frontier were capable of the hard work that was necessary to conquer the continent of North America. Roosevelt, as he entered politics, changed his views from the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race to encompass all English-speaking people of America, thus the birth of Anglo-American race.

Later in his life, Roosevelt's beliefs shifted slightly as he determined that the English-speaking peoples were destined to dominate the world, but not the Anglo-Saxon race. As Edward N. Saveth explained in his article, "Theodore Roosevelt: Image and Ideology," "Roosevelt believed that there were no Anglo-Saxons and that the Englishman who 'was commonly mistaken for an Anglo-Saxon was actually a medley of low Dutch, Celtic, Scandinavian and Norman elements with the Germanic strain predominant.'"<sup>4</sup> The mix of races that made up the Anglo-Saxon in Roosevelt's beliefs provided further evidence of Roosevelt's shift to Anglo-American belief. Saveth went on to describe how Roosevelt accepted southern and

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<sup>4</sup> Edward N. Saveth, "Theodore Roosevelt: Image and Ideology," *New York History*, 72, No. 1, 1991: 58. Accessed Oct. 1, 2017. <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.snhu.edu/stable/23175177>

eastern European races “...as they abandoned old-world cultures and allegiances and adopted the mold of American nationality as shaped by earlier arrivals whose ethnicity and ideals were similar to Roosevelt’s own.”<sup>5</sup> Roosevelt had altered his earlier teachings about racial superiority and had included those races similar to his own in keeping with his beliefs about which group was best to spread across the world and civilize those inferior races, the Anglo-Americans.

It was Roosevelt’s new belief in Anglo-Americanism that would become his mantra throughout his career in politics and the backbone of his personal beliefs. According to Leroy G. Dorsey in his book, *We Are All American, Pure and Simple: Theodore Roosevelt and the Myth of Americanism*, “These three tenets of his Americanism—strength, integrity, and earned equality—became a staple in Roosevelt’s rhetoric throughout his career.”<sup>6</sup> Roosevelt would use Americanism to satisfy all groups in the United States, nativists, immigrants, and non-whites, to demonstrate how all could become successful Americans. As successful Americans, all the different peoples would strengthen the country if they would follow his ideals of being strong, and having integrity, to earn the equality of success. If those included in Roosevelt’s Americanism showed they had good moral character and physical hardiness of vitality, they were an asset to the country that would help to further spread Roosevelt’s ideals of America.

Roosevelt respected the strong sense of pride Native Americans were instilled with that gave them the resilience to stand against the Anglo-Saxons as they conquered what would become the United States of America. He referenced the difference between America and the

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<sup>5</sup> Saveth, “Theodore Roosevelt: Image and Ideology,” 60.

<sup>6</sup> Leroy G. Dorsey, *We Are All Americans, Pure and Simple: Theodore Roosevelt and the Myth of Americanism*, (Tuscaloosa: University Alabama Press, 2007), 18.



other areas around the world that the English had conquered. He talked of how there was no fighting in Australia with either the natives or other European nations.<sup>7</sup> According to Roosevelt,

In what now forms the United States, taking the country as a whole, the foes who had to be met and overcome were very much more formidable. The ground had to be not only settled but conquered, sometimes at the expense of the natives, often at the expense of the rival European races. As already pointed out the Indians themselves formed one of the main factors in deciding the fate of the continent. They were never able in the end to avert the white conquest, but they could often delay its advance for a long spell of years.<sup>8</sup>

The respect Roosevelt had for the endurance of the Native Americans was seen in his writing, while he still presented the Anglo-Americans as the dominant race that overcame not only the Natives, but also other inferior European races.

Roosevelt, being a Progressive, believed that there was more to the Anglo-Saxon belief than he had learned about when he was in Germany and while he attended Harvard and Columbia. Roosevelt believed through the assimilation of both immigrants and Native Americans that the Anglo-Saxon race evolved into a stronger, Anglo-American race. It was the Anglo-American race belief which allowed Roosevelt to accept the addition of the Native Americans into the culture of the United States. The Native Americans could be assimilated into the American culture and then become part of the Anglo-American race that Roosevelt believed was destined to spread across and conquer the world.

Roosevelt was not alone in his belief that Native Americans could be Americanized; other Progressives believed in the same theory. Some even thought that education of the young Native Americans would lead to future Native Americans becoming Americanized or part of

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<sup>7</sup> Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West: From the Alleghenies to the Mississippi*, 42.

<sup>8</sup> Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West: From the Alleghenies to the Mississippi*, 43.

Roosevelt's Anglo-American race. One such person was Richard Henry Pratt, the superintendent of the Indian School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.<sup>9</sup> According to David Wallace Adams in his article, "More Than a Game: The Carlisle Indians Take to the Gridiron, 1893-1917," Pratt was "Convinced that the source of Indian savagery was environmental rather than genetic, Pratt believed that the work of civilizing Indians could only be carried out if they were removed from the influences of reservation life for a period of five years or more."<sup>10</sup> The belief many Progressives had was that if they could remove the Native Americans from the life of a "savage" and educate them in "white" ways, the Native Americans would become civilized and successfully contribute to American society.

Adams followed up with analysis of the Progressives' beliefs in the early 1900s:

Carlisle's white fans, it turns out, had several reasons to cheer for the Indians. First, some found the Carlisle team living proof of the proposition expounded by Pratt and other reformers—namely, that Indians, while products of a savage heritage, were fully capable of making the transition to civilized life. Adherents of this view accepted, uncritically, the belief that policymakers' definition of the Indian problem had been accurate: savagism and civilization were irreconcilable states of existence in the progressive flow of historical time. Indians, fated for extinction as savages, might expect and surely deserved complete integration into the American polity once they were civilized.<sup>11</sup>

The Progressive or Reformer idea about the Native Americans, at this time in America history, was that they could be educated and taught how to be civilized. The idea of the superior race educating inferior races to be civilized runs parallel to Roosevelt's idea of educating inferior races to understand self-government. The Progressive ideas of Roosevelt shaped his foreign policy, in the Philippines and the Caribbean, as well as his domestic policy, of dealing with

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<sup>9</sup> David Wallace Adams, "More than a game: the Carlisle Indians take to the gridiron, 1893-1917," 32, No. 1, (Spring, 2001), 25. Accessed on Jan. 5, 2017. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3650836>.

<sup>10</sup> Adams, "More than a game: the Carlisle Indians take to the gridiron, 1893-1917," 26.

<sup>11</sup> Adams, "More than a game: the Carlisle Indians take to the gridiron, 1893-1917," 39.

immigrants and Native Americans. He wanted to educate the inferior races in America so they could become part of his Anglo-American race which was, in his view, the most advanced race of the world.

Through assimilation, Roosevelt believed there was a place for the Native Americans within the culture of America. However, for those Natives that did not become Americanized, he felt they needed to be looked after so white Americans did not take advantage of their naivety. An excellent example of how Roosevelt felt it his duty to take care of the Native Americans until they were Americanized was in letters he wrote about leasing land to cattlemen from the Standing Rock Reservation in South Dakota in January of 1902. Roosevelt first discussed his concern "...that to lease the lands for five years would be undesirable and work a hardship." Roosevelt also pointed out his concern for what land was to be leased: "...that the land where the Indians are thickly settled, on the Grand River, should not be included in the lease that at the outside the only lease should be for a strip of twenty-five miles broad, on the western part of the reservation..." Roosevelt then discussed how commendable it was that, rather than allow white cattlemen to graze over the land for free, the Indian agents were creating a lease; that would create an income for the Native Americans.<sup>12</sup> This letter showed how Roosevelt was looking out for the interests of Native Americans and that his goal was for the Native Americans to be productive on the land that they occupied, an important first step toward becoming Anglo-Americans. However, he failed to see that his ideas for the Native Americans were still part of a forced assimilation because he failed to understand that the Native Americans had a culture. He

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<sup>12</sup> *Letter from Theodore Roosevelt to Ethan Allen Hitchcock*, Theodore Roosevelt Papers, Library of Congress Manuscript Division. Accessed Dec. 2, 2017. <http://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/Research/Digital-Library/Record?lobID=0181338>. Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library. Dickinson State University.

viewed their culture as inferior just because it was not a part of or equal to, in his mind, his Anglo-American culture.

Native Americans living on the reservations, as far as Roosevelt was concerned, were having trouble taking the steps toward becoming part of the American culture. While Roosevelt was President, and a believer in the Progressive Movement, he believed it was part of his job to care for those who could not care for themselves, inferior races. He saw the Native Americans as an inferior race that did not understand how to become successful in America. Just as his progressive ideas led him to alter the economic system in America to allow those who worked hard to achieve success and not let the rich elites abuse them, he believed that the inferior Native Americans would need that same looking after so they could have the opportunity to be educated in American culture and one day their descendants would be able to be part of the Anglo-American race.

Roosevelt showed his beliefs to the citizens of the United States during his inaugural parade on March 4, 1905. As described by Jesse Rhodes in his Smithsonian Magazine article, Roosevelt invited six Indian Chiefs to ride down Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington D.C. The six Chiefs were: Quanah Parker of the Comanche, Buckskin Charlie of the Ute, American Horse of the Sioux, Little Plume of the Blackfeet, Hollow Horn Bear of the Sioux and Geronimo of the Apache, and all wore their ceremonial garb including face paint and feather headdresses<sup>13</sup>. (See picture on page 46). All six of the chiefs were from tribes that had fought against the United States government and were still fighting in 1905 against the white settlers over natural

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<sup>13</sup> Jesse Rhodes, "Indians on the Inaugural March: At the invitation of Theodore Roosevelt, six Indian chiefs marched in his inaugural parade as representatives of their tribes," Smithsonian.com January 14, 2009. Accessed Dec. 10, 2017. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/indians-on-the-inaugural-march-46032118/>

resources. The chiefs were marching in the parade to stay in the public consciousness of the American people.

According to Rhodes, Roosevelt had his own purpose for inviting them to march.

Flanking the chiefs were 350 cadets from the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania. Capt. Richard Henry Pratt established the school in 1879 to “Americanize” Native American children, forcing them to abandon all facets of tribal culture. On arrival, students were re-clothed, renamed and began the process of being recast in the image of the dominant white culture, which involved everything from adopting the English language to being baptized under non-Native religions. Their presence in the 1905 inaugural parade was intended to showcase a new reality of Native American living. (Even American Horse had children at Carlisle, hoping that a Western education would allow them to better adapt to a rapidly changing world.)<sup>14</sup>

Literally parading the Native American Chiefs down Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington D.C. allowed Roosevelt to show the American people how the inferior race was assimilating into his Anglo-American race. Roosevelt’s beliefs that the Native Americans were inferior and needed to have the superior Anglo-American race take care of them fit into his Progressive views that weaker races needed the stronger races to educate and lead them.

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<sup>14</sup> Rhodes, “Indians on the Inaugural March: At the invitation of Theodore Roosevelt, six Indian chiefs marched in his inaugural parade as representatives of their tribes,” 2009.



**Figure 3: Six Indian chiefs passing in review before President Roosevelt during his 1905 Inaugural parade.<sup>15</sup>**

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<sup>15</sup> Jesse Rhodes, "Indians on the inaugural march: At the invitation of Theodore Roosevelt, six Indian chiefs marched in his inaugural parade as representatives of their tribes," Smithsonian.com January 14, 2009. Accessed Dec. 10, 2017. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/indians-on-the-inaugural-march-46032118/>

#### **Chapter 4: Roosevelt and the Native Americans in New York**

Theodore Roosevelt was part of the government of New York at multiple times in his life: first as a New York State Representative from 1882 to 1884, as Commissioner and President of the New York City Police Board from 1895 to 1897, and then as Governor of New York State from 1899 to 1900. It was during these years, serving in different positions in New York that he pushed reform in politics and brought his beliefs that the inferior Native Americans needed to be educated or cared for by the superior Anglo-American race. As mentioned previously, his time as a representative was spent mostly pushing for Civil Service Reform in New York City. While commissioner of the New York City Police, there were instances when Roosevelt's ideas about race, including the Native Americans, were revealed. When Roosevelt was Governor of New York he acted in what he felt was the best interest of the Native Americans living in New York and pushed for them to be educated so their children would be assimilated into American culture. He also pushed for the Natives to move away from shared land to individual ownership of land, and when the Natives were not accepting of this policy, he stepped into the paternalistic role to ensure the inferior Natives were cared for and not abused by the whites around them.

While serving as the Minority Leader of the New York State Assembly, Roosevelt spent most of his time and energy on reforming the Civil Service in New York City. There is much evidence, as presented in Chapter 2, about Roosevelt's reform views, which brought an end to the Patronage System and replaced it with the Merit System. Because he was so busy reforming the Civil Service System in New York, during his tenure in the New York State Assembly he did not spend much effort on the Native Americans of New York. He would address the issues of the Native Americans during his two years as Governor of New York.

Roosevelt, the Commissioner and President of the New York City Police Board, was focused on reforming the police force and ending the corruption that was rampant in the force. To that end, there were instances where Roosevelt's views of Anglo-American superiority were represented. Roosevelt described the different men who were promoted during his two years as Commissioner and President of the New York City Police Board in his *Theodore Roosevelt: An Autobiography*. In his book, he described his success with the New York Police force and the instances where men were recognized for their heroism in the line of duty, and he discussed the bicycle squad he created which frequently stopped runaway carriages. "Three of the best riders of the bicycle squad, whose names and records happen to occur to me, were men of the three ethnic strains most strongly represented in the New York police force, being respectively of native American, German, and Irish parentage."<sup>1</sup> The descriptions of each of the men showed Roosevelt's views of the different races represented. "The German was a man of enormous power, and he was able to stop each of the many runaways he tackled without losing his wheel."<sup>2</sup> Here, he described a German immigrant of enormous power, supporting his racial view through the stereotype that Germans were a strong, superior race. Then he described the "native" American who was actually Anglo-Saxon: "The Yankee, though a tall, powerful man and a very good rider, scarcely came up to the German in either respect; he possessed exceptional ability, however, as well as exceptional nerve and coolness, and he also won his promotion."<sup>3</sup> The "native" American Roosevelt described would be of his Anglo-American race; though not as large as the German, but having exceptional nerve and coolness. The Irishman, "The third

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<sup>1</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, *Theodore Roosevelt: An Autobiography*, (Auckland: The Floating Press, 2014), 196. Accessed Jan. 5, 2018. <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.snhu.edu/lib/snhu-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1706584>.

<sup>2</sup> Roosevelt, *Theodore Roosevelt: An Autobiography*, 196.

<sup>3</sup> Roosevelt, *Theodore Roosevelt: An Autobiography*, 196.



member of the trio, a tall, sinewy man with flaming red hair, which rather added to the terror he inspired in evil-doers, was usually stationed in a tough part of the city, where there was a tendency to crimes of violence, and incidentally and occasional desire to harass wheelmen.”<sup>4</sup> His description of the Irish as sinewy showed his respect again for the Irish, which he earlier explained were part of the Anglo-Saxon race that occupied England after the Teutonic race moved across Northern Europe onto the British Isles. The previous descriptions by Roosevelt showed his belief that physical strength was a clear sign of racial superiority. Physical strength was a big part of his youth; as was discussed in Chapter 1 he idolized his father’s physical prowess and worked hard his entire life to be in the best physical shape.

Roosevelt was fully immersed in his Anglo-American view by the time he served as the Commissioner and President of the New York City Police Board. He believed that becoming an American preceded any ancestral connections and it led to a stronger nation and nationality. Roosevelt felt that it was more important to come together as Americans rather than be divided based on race or religion. He expressed this belief in a speech he gave to The Liberal Club of Buffalo while he was with the New York City Police: “I am a Republican, born here, a Protestant. Judge Goff is a Democrat, a Catholic, born in Ireland. We are both Americans, straight out. We both acted merely as Americans. We stood shoulder to shoulder as decent men should stand, when the fight is waged for decency.”<sup>5</sup> His point was that party, religious affiliation, and place of birth should not enter into the decision when doing the honest work of protecting and serving the public as either a police officer or a politician, but it also showed how

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<sup>4</sup> Roosevelt, *Theodore Roosevelt: An Autobiography*, 197.

<sup>5</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, “Americanism in Municipal Politics,” *Almanac of Theodore Roosevelt – Complete Speeches of Theodore Roosevelt – Teddy Roosevelt*, Sept. 9, 1895. Accessed Jan 7, 2018. <http://www.theodore-roosevelt.com/images/research/txtspeeches/589.pdf>

he felt about what it meant to be an American. Once a person assimilates and becomes an American, it no longer matters where he/she came from before as their allegiance now belongs to America and they are now part of the American culture.

Roosevelt bluntly stated his view that “American” was a race in his speech to The Liberal Club of Buffalo:

I have spoken of showing Americanism in creed. Now show it in race. Remember, that the one being abhorrent to the powers above the earth and under them is the hyphenated American—the “German-American,” the “Irish-American,” or the “native-American.” Be Americans, pure and simple! If you don’t act on the theory that every man who in good faith assumes the duties and responsibilities of an American citizen in a spirit of true Americanism is an American, and is to be treated as such, if you do not act on that spirit, you are yourselves unfit to take part in managing our government and you are bound to make a failure if you try to better the conditions of our cities.<sup>6</sup>

His point was that political affiliations as well as religious affiliations are put aside when there is a need to represent the laws of America, whether national or local. He went on to discuss himself and two other board members, one a Catholic from Ireland and the other a Hebrew of German decent and how all three were Americans who approached the problems of New York City from the point of honesty and with the betterment of the city in mind. Roosevelt’s views come into full light in his explanation of overcoming party politics through honesty and with the intention of making the “right” decision for the people of New York. His speech showed how he felt that, once assimilated and part of the American culture, Anglo-Americans were part of the superior race who would act in the best interests of those they represent.

In another speech Roosevelt offered another view of his Anglo-American beliefs in dealing with the immigrants to New York City. In his speech recorded in *Munsey’s Magazine*,

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<sup>6</sup> Roosevelt, “Americanism in Municipal Politics,” Sept. 9, 1895.

he discussed the reasons for many of the new appointees to the police force being born in other countries as New York City is made up of many immigrants that were born outside the United States. It was during this discussion that Roosevelt mentioned a reason for more Irish than German born immigrants becoming part of the force: “There were, of course, not nearly as many men of German as of Irish birth appointed on the police force, because the Germans have to learn a new language.”<sup>7</sup> Roosevelt believed in all people of the United States being part of the American culture and that speaking the English language was a large part in being Anglo-American. He showed in this speech that an immigrant learning the language was a huge step toward becoming assimilated into the Anglo-American race.

As a Commissioner and President of the New York City Police Board, Roosevelt demonstrated his race views and put into action his beliefs that anyone who assimilated into the American culture was part of his Anglo-American race. His speeches and writings showed how he believed those who assimilated were part of his superior race and would act in the best interest of Americans. Roosevelt explained that learning the language would be part of the assimilation process and how not speaking English would delay appointments in the police force of New York City, but that after learning it they could become active members. It was as Governor of New York that his beliefs were directed toward the Native Americans.

As Governor of New York Roosevelt saw it as his responsibility to take care of the Native Americans within his state. His ideas were for the Native Americans to assimilate and become part of the American culture, especially in the form of land ownership, and then

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<sup>7</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, “The Ethnology of the Police,” *Almanac of Theodore Roosevelt – Complete Speeches of Theodore Roosevelt – Teddy Roosevelt*, June 6, 1897. Accessed Jan 7, 2018. <http://www.theodore-roosevelt.com/images/research/txtspeeches/593.pdf>

eventually become Anglo-American. It may have required many generations before they would be acceptably assimilated into the Anglo-American race, but they would become part of the American culture eventually.

Roosevelt, as governor, had a plan to educate the youth of the Native Americans in New York and assimilate them into American culture. As described by Laurence M. Hauptman in his article “Theodore Roosevelt and the Indians of New York State,” “Like most thoughtful friends of the Indian at the end of the nineteenth century, Governor Roosevelt believed in bringing ‘civilization’ to the Indians in order to absorb them into American society through a four-pronged formula of forced assimilation.”<sup>8</sup> Hauptman went on to describe the four-pronged formula: “This ‘Americanization’ process included the Christianizing activities of missionaries on reservations... exposure of the Indian to the white Americans’ ways through compulsory education and boarding schools... break up of tribal lands and allotment to individual Indians...in return for accepting land-in-severalty, the rewarding of United States citizenship.”<sup>9</sup> As governor of New York, Roosevelt wanted the Native Americans to assimilate and become citizens.

One of the important parts of the “four-pronged formula” was educating the youth of the Native Americans, especially in the English language. As Hauptman described, “During his administration, all Indian children on the Tonawanda Reservation were compelled to speak only English on the school premises.”<sup>10</sup> By permitting the education of the next generation, Native Americans moved closer to becoming Americans and understood how to be productive members

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<sup>8</sup> Laurence M. Hauptman, “Governor Theodore Roosevelt and the Indians of New York State,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 119, No. 1, (Feb. 21, 1975), 1. Accessed on Sept. 25, 2017. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/986645>

<sup>9</sup> Hauptman, “Governor Theodore Roosevelt and the Indians of New York State,” 1-2.

<sup>10</sup> Hauptman, “Governor Theodore Roosevelt and the Indians of New York State,” 3.

of American society; therefore, they assimilated and were on the path to Anglo-Americanism. For those who did not assimilate, Roosevelt felt the need to care for them, as an inferior race, and prevent them from being abused. Roosevelt, according to Hauptman, created a commission on December 4, 1900, "...to investigate the conditions of the New York Indians."<sup>11</sup> His agenda for the commission was to get the Native Americans to accept individual land ownership and move away from tribal ownership. Roosevelt felt the first step in assimilation of the Natives was to have them accept land ownership, so the reservations could be broken into private land.

It was understood by many reformers, in this time, that it was the responsibility of the government to care for those who were inferior and not able to care for themselves. To that end, Roosevelt understood that his role as Governor of New York was to be responsible for caring for the people of New York. He would have seen the Native Americans as needing more help than others in his state as they were unable to understand how to be part of the American culture. As Hauptman described, "Governor Roosevelt and the reformers shared a common approach with regard to the Indian. Each believed in the responsibility of the 'better sort' to take up the red man's burden. Each shared an almost blind faith in remolding the Indian in the white image."<sup>12</sup> As a reformer it would have fallen under his responsibility to educate Native Americans so they could understand and then prosper as part of the American culture.

Roosevelt, in his different positions of government in New York, made decisions based on his education and beliefs in racial superiority. His reform ideas fell in line with his Anglo-American race views in that, as a member of the superior race and a member of the government, his responsibility was to care for those in his charge and to act in an honest and upstanding way

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<sup>11</sup> Hauptman, "Governor Theodore Roosevelt and the Indians of New York State," 6.

<sup>12</sup> Hauptman, "Governor Theodore Roosevelt and the Indians of New York State," 7.

to serve those he represented. In all his positions he always acted in ways he felt reflected his responsibility as an Anglo-American to lead those he felt to be inferior through education, and legislation if need be, to ensure all people were part of the culture in a productive and meaningful way.



**Figure 4: Teddy Roosevelt and the Foundation of the NYC Bike Patrol<sup>13</sup>**

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<sup>13</sup> “Teddy Roosevelt and the Foundation of the NYC Bike Patrol [PHOTOS].” Bowery Boogie. Sept. 27, 2013. Accessed Jan. 13, 2018. <http://www.boweryboogie.com/2013/09/teddy-roosevelt-foundation-nyc-bike-patrol-photos/>

## Chapter 5: Roosevelt and the Native Americans at the National Level

Roosevelt brought his beliefs and views with him when he served the national government in Washington D.C. as a United States Civil Service Commissioner from 1889 to 1895 and as the President of the United States from 1901 to 1909. As a United States Civil Service Commissioner, he pursued a policy of assimilation for Native Americans, and in those cases where the Native Americans would not assimilate, then he viewed it the responsibility of the U.S. Government to care for and protect them. While President of the United States, Roosevelt continued his policy of assimilation of the Native Americans, while protecting the rights of those who did not assimilate.

As a United States Civil Service Commissioner, Roosevelt continued his beliefs that Native Americans should assimilate into the American culture. Roosevelt's belief that the inferior races needed to be educated in self-government by the superior Anglo-American race was seen in Roosevelt's policy while he was part of the Civil Service Commission, to have Native Americans involved in the agency that was overseeing their affairs. As described by Edmund Morris in *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*, "Rioting by Sioux in South Dakota reservations, where maladministration and corruption were rife, had forced him to rethink his old paternal attitudes to the red man, and he now tried to persuade Administration officials that Indians should take part wherever possible in agency affairs."<sup>1</sup> When it came to the reservations, Roosevelt wanted Native Americans that he deemed "civilized" to be examples for the rest of the tribe of how to assimilate. In a letter to Joseph Gilbert Thorp, Jr. Roosevelt described his hope: "I should take the civilized members of the different tribes and put them to work in instructing

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<sup>1</sup> Edmund Morris, *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*, (New York: The Modern Library, 2001,) 441.

their fellows in farming, blacksmithing, and the like, and should extend the present system of paid Indian judges and police.”<sup>2</sup> The idea Roosevelt was supporting was that those Native Americans who had become “civilized” and understood the idea of American culture could act as models for the others to strive to become.

Roosevelt, while a Civil Service Commissioner, was in contact with Herbert Welsh, a known Philadelphian reformer who organized the Indian Rights Association and would work with Roosevelt to convince President Harrison to extend Civil Service to include the Indian Service. Welsh also pressed Roosevelt about the corruption involved in the Native American Reservations in the west. Roosevelt responded to Welsh with his intention to visit the Pine Ridge agency and the fact that a man he knew quite well was acting as commissioner out there. “He tells me he can give me an immense amount of information as to political favoritism and dishonesty in the Indian service out there; much of what he thinks would be of great value to me in promulgating the new rules and giving me an idea of the evils we have to fight.”<sup>3</sup> Roosevelt was committed to ensuring the men and agencies in charge of the Native Americans on reservations were honest and operated under the merit system.

Roosevelt believed, as discussed throughout this paper, that when in the service of the government, men were to be honest and serve the country in the most upright way possible. His discussion of bringing the Indian Services under the Civil Service would put those in charge of the Indian Services under the merit system rather than the patronage system. So, those responsible for the Native Americans would be there based on their credentials and education

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<sup>2</sup> Elting E. Morison, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt Vol 1*, (Universal Digital Library: Harvard University Press, 1951), 238. Accessed Jan. 14, 2018. <https://archive.org/details/lettersoftheodo00691mbp>

<sup>3</sup> Morison, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt Vol 1*, 266.



rather than as a political favor. The hope behind this idea was that those under the merit system would not be corruptible and would act on behalf of Native Americans. According to William T. Hagan in his article “Civil Service Commissioner Theodore Roosevelt and the Indian Rights Association,” under Roosevelt’s advice, “President Harrison placed nearly 700 positions in the Indian Schools under Civil Service.”<sup>4</sup> He attempted to make the reservation system honest to ensure those Native Americans who did not choose assimilation and remained inferior would be taken care of by the superior Anglo-Americans.

As a Civil Service Commissioner, Roosevelt, after being asked by the Indian Rights Association, decided to tour Native American reservations to investigate for any corruption. As Roosevelt described in his report, “By direction of the Commission, I made a month’s tour of certain Indian reservations and Indian schools in South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas, ending September 20<sup>th</sup> last.”<sup>5</sup> He described his visit to Pine Ridge Reservation and the importance of the Indian judges and Indian police which kept this group of “...Indians who have only recently come out of the wild state.”<sup>6</sup> The analysis made by Roosevelt was that the Indian police were hard working “civilized” men who dealt with the “Ghost Dancers” and needed to be “...armed with carbines, not merely revolvers.”<sup>7</sup> He believed that the inferior races were “savage” as they preferred to live under their old culture’s system rather than assimilate to American culture. This was consistent with his progressive policies for education across the country, which were aimed

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<sup>4</sup> William T. Hagan, “Civil Service Commissioner Theodore Roosevelt and the Indian Rights Association,” *Pacific Historical Review*, 44, No. 2, (May: 1975), 192. Accessed Sept. 20, 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3638002>

<sup>5</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, “Report made to the United States Civil Service Commission,” *Almanac of Theodore Roosevelt – Teddy Roosevelt*, 3. Accessed Jan 13, 2018. <http://www.theodore-roosevelt.com/images/research/tstspeeches/765.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Roosevelt, “Report made to the United States Civil Service Commission,” 5.

<sup>7</sup> Roosevelt, “Report made to the United States Civil Service Commission,” 5.

at developing universal citizenship and “elevating” the culture, specifically the poor and recent immigrants.

Roosevelt felt the way to get the Native Americans to assimilate was through the education of the youth. In his report, after his visit to Pine Ridge, he discussed what he witnessed at a Catholic boarding school: “I was much pleased with what I saw there as to the comfort in which the children were kept and as to the kind of education they were given. The sisters and brothers of the denomination teach, the lessons all being taught in English. The boys are taught farming and the girls housewifery.”<sup>8</sup> His description of being pleased made sense as the education of the children was in line with his beliefs, that if the youth assimilated, the next generation of Natives would understand how to operate in American culture and the generation after them would be included in American culture. Roosevelt felt that with each generation the Native Americans would become more included in the Anglo-American race.

Roosevelt also commented in his report about how impressed he was with the progress made by Native Americans as they were becoming more American. “I was much pleased to see two stores on the reservation owned and managed by Indians. They were much like ordinary frontier stores, with similar classes of goods.”<sup>9</sup> The goods sold in the stores were shipped in from Omaha and Chicago, which again showed Roosevelt that the reservation was in line with preparing the Native Americans for assimilation. Roosevelt’s race beliefs would be shown in his report as well.

In the report Roosevelt commented on the amount of mixed race families he witnessed, referred to as half-breeds. “I was struck, among other things, by the fact that the half-breed

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<sup>8</sup> Roosevelt, “Report made to the United States Civil Service Commission,” 9.

<sup>9</sup> Roosevelt, “Report made to the United States Civil Service Commission,” 9.

families were more numerous than those of either the pure whites or the pure Indians.”<sup>10</sup> He showed his views about his superior race in his discussion of the choices made by the educated Indian women:

I was much impressed by the fact that even when a white man was a pretty worthless fellow, it was of the utmost possible advantage to an educated or partially educated Indian woman to marry him rather than to marry a good blanket Indian of her own race. In but few cases did I see instances where graduates of the best schools had gone back after marrying a white man, whereas, they find it wholly impossible to retain the ways of civilization if they marry a blanket Indian and live with him in a tepee. The white man is sure to have a house with two or three rooms, and is always pleased to have his wife keep the house and herself and children decent and tidy. He thus gives her a chance to keep to the standard she has reached, and to have her children educated in white ways, whereas she has no chance at all if she goes back to the Indian tepee.<sup>11</sup>

The description from Roosevelt supported his belief that Native Americans were inferior to his Anglo-American or white race. His description of even a worthless white man being chosen by an educated Indian woman is a glaring example of how much he looked down on the Native American race. The idea that a Native American woman would choose a worthless white man over a Native American man who had chosen to hold on to Native American culture rather than assimilate was so unbelievable to Roosevelt that he made sure to point it out. He also showed how white education was the answer to his “Indian problem” as the educated Indian women rarely went back to live with a “blanket Indian” in a “tepee” as she would have no chance at a life if she did. His belief that any “civilized” person would prefer to live in a house rather than on a reservation in a “tepee” also showed how limited his understanding of the Native American culture was; he only saw them as primitive and could not accept that their culture could possibly

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<sup>10</sup> Roosevelt, “Report made to the United States Civil Service Commission,” 9.

<sup>11</sup> Roosevelt, “Report made to the United States Civil Service Commission,” 9.

be a choice for anyone. It also showed how he accepted the mixed race over the pure Native American race, which would support his belief that assimilation, even through genetic mixing, would make them part of the Anglo-American race. He would rather have the mixing of the races than allow the Native Americans to remain pure, so that the Anglo-American race would dominate the inferior race and make them a part of his superior culture.

The tour Roosevelt took to the Native American reservations presented him with the treatment of Native Americans, and some historians have argued it changed Roosevelt's views toward Native Americans. As Morris attempted to explain,

He spent the next month on a "tedious but important" tour of the neighboring Indian reservations. The dusty hopelessness of those sprawling communities, which shocks visitors to this day seems to have wrought a profound change in his attitude to the American Indian. During his years as a rancher, Roosevelt had acquired plenty of anti-Indian prejudice, strangely at odds with his enlightened attitude to blacks. But his research into the great Indian military heroes for "The Winning of the West" had done much to moderate this. Now, touring Pine Ridge and Crow Creek on behalf of the Great White Father, he looked on the red man not as an adversary but as a ward of the state, whom it was his duty to protect.<sup>12</sup>

Morris attributed the tour of the reservations by Roosevelt to the change his views about Native Americans. However, as has been shown throughout this paper, Roosevelt was a reformer first and did view the Native Americans as a formidable adversary when the Anglo-Americans first arrived on this continent, but he always viewed them as inferior and in need of a superior race to educate them in how to be civilized.

Roosevelt's time as a United States Commissioner of Civil Service showed his beliefs that the Native Americans should be assimilated into the American culture. He pushed for the children of Native Americans to be educated in English and the American culture, so they could

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<sup>12</sup> Morris, *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*, 466.

be assimilated. He also showed his belief in rewarding and making examples of those Native Americans who became “civilized” and chose to live more like their white neighbors. For those Native Americans who did not assimilate, he saw a need for the superior race of the Anglo-Americans to care for and protect their inferior wards. Roosevelt’s belief that Native Americans either assimilated or became wards of the United States continued when he became President of the United States.

Theodore Roosevelt became the President with the assassination of President McKinley in 1901 and then brought his reform ideas to the office. As President, Roosevelt continued to act on his belief that Anglo-Americans were the superior race which had to educate inferior races to understand self-government. All those of the inferior races who refused to assimilate would need to be cared for or others might abuse them. Roosevelt understood that the Native Americans were not dealt with fairly when the whites bought land from them. He saw the office of the President as being responsible for caring for all the people he represented, especially those who needed more support than others, like the Native Americans. As Roosevelt stated in his autobiography, “In connection with the Indians, by the way, it was again and again necessary to assert the position of the President as steward of the whole people.”<sup>13</sup> He saw it as his responsibility to care for those peoples he thought were inferior to Anglo-Americans as they did not understand how to be modern.

Roosevelt saw it as part of his job as President to look after those who did not understand how modern America worked and therefore were susceptible to being abused. He understood

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<sup>13</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, *Theodore Roosevelt: An Autobiography*, (Auckland: The Floating Press, 2014), 388. Accessed Jan. 5, 2018. <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.snhu.edu/lib/snhu-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1706584>.

and admitted that Native Americans had been deceived in earlier land deals with whites. As Roosevelt stated, "...when Oklahoma became a State we were obliged to use the executive power to protect Indian rights and property, for there had been an enormous amount of fraud in the obtaining of Indian lands by white men."<sup>14</sup> The ideas instilled in Roosevelt by his father, that as a Christian, he had a responsibility to provide for those less fortunate and as a leader, he had to set an example of the expectations he had for those he lead, were part of why he felt the need to care for the Native Americans while President.

President Roosevelt believed in the assimilation of the Native Americans and discussed how they were better off when they assimilated than they were before Europeans came to the continent. Roosevelt explained his views about assimilation in a speech on January 18, 1909 in Washington D.C. at the Celebration of the African Diamond Jubilee of the Methodist Episcopal Church:

The merely savage tribes, both in North and South America, who were very few in number, have much decreased or have vanished, and grave wrongs have often been committed against them as well as by them. But all of the Indians who had attained to an even low grade of industrial and social efficiency have remained in the land, and have for the most part simply been assimilated with the intruders, the assimilation marking- on the whole a very considerable rise in their conditions. Taking into account the Indians of pure blood, and the mixed bloods in which the Indian element is large, it is undoubtedly true that the Indian population of America is larger to-day than it was when Columbus discovered the continent, and stands on a far higher plane of happiness and efficiency.<sup>15</sup>

Roosevelt discussed the assimilation of the Native Americans to lead into a discussion about how much better off the Africans in Africa were due to the missionaries that went there to educate the

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<sup>14</sup> Roosevelt, *Theodore Roosevelt: An Autobiography*, 388.

<sup>15</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, "The Expansion of the White Races," *Almanac of Theodore Roosevelt – Complete Speeches of Theodore Roosevelt – Teddy Roosevelt*. Accessed Jan. 15, 2018. <http://www.theodore-roosevelt.com/images/research/txtspeeches/318.txt>

primitive people. Later in the speech he explained the benefits to Africa brought by the missionaries:

Bishop Hartzell's work has been done in Africa, the continent in which of all others there has been the most need for Christian work, and in which that work shows signs of reaching its widest development. It has been indeed a Dark Continent, and some of the white men who have gone thither have by their acts deepened the gloom. Let us as a race be thankful that so many other men have gone thither to strive for the uplift of the people, to strive for the betterment of conditions. Our own country has in the past committed grave wrong against Africa for which it should amply atone, and no better atonement can be made than that which is being made by the American missionaries of every creed and church, who are now doing so much in almost every corner of Africa for the physical, the intellectual, and the moral betterment of the people.<sup>16</sup>

Roosevelt called Africa a “Dark Continent” in need of “Christian work” again reminding listeners of his belief that Africa was a primitive land and was made better by those whites who went there on missionary work and brought education to the masses. The connection between Roosevelt and the central tenet of New Imperialism: the “White Man’s Burden” cannot be missed. He found the idea of Anglo-Americans traveling abroad and bringing an education those inferior races to be in line with his mission at home with Native Americans.

Clearly, Roosevelt believed inferior races needed to be educated by the superior industrialized Americans, and in the case of Native Americans, the best thing would be to assimilate into the Anglo-American race. Those who had become part of the “enlightened” race understood the benefits of modern progress and had the opportunity to become successful. On a visit to the Oklahoma Territory on April 9, 1905, he spoke of being one people and all having the same opportunity to prove themselves:

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<sup>16</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, “The Expansion of the White Races,” *Almanac of Theodore Roosevelt – Complete Speeches of Theodore Roosevelt – Teddy Roosevelt*. Accessed Jan. 15, 2018. <http://www.theodore-roosevelt.com/images/research/txtspeeches/318.txt>

The next time I come to Oklahoma I trust I will come to a State, and it won't be my fault if this is not so. I greet the veterans of the Civil War who came here today to greet the President, because we are one people and one country, and not to be divided forever. I am glad to see Qunah Parker, who has done so well with his farm. One thing of which I am proud is that I have tried to give a fair deal to every man.

Give the red man the same chance as the white. This country is founded on the doctrine of giving each man a fair show to see what there is in him.<sup>17</sup>

Roosevelt believed he presented a fair deal to every man in the United States while he was President. His view was that Native Americans had the same opportunity as all other Americans; all they had to do was assimilate and work hard to be successful. His definition of success was to be a part of his Anglo-American race that understood self-governing and progressed to the point that they were able to live in comfort and trade around the world.

Roosevelt's blindness to those he felt were inferior was also a part of the bigger Progressive movement. Progressives in general did not realize that those they were "educating" may not have seen their culture as the best culture. It was a matter of Progressives and Roosevelt not being able to understand those they felt were inferior well enough to really know what was in their best interests. Roosevelt did not understand that Native Americans viewed assimilation as the end of their civilization. He admittedly saw the pride of the Native Americans, yet he did not understand their reaction to forced assimilation. In his book, *The Winning of the West: From the Alleghenies to the Mississippi*, he discussed one of the Native American leaders who was forced to give up lands south of the Ohio to the Virginians in 1774 and how, even in defeat, he was defiant:

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<sup>17</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, "At Frederick, OK," Almanac of Theodore Roosevelt – Complete Speeches of Theodore Roosevelt – Teddy Roosevelt. Accessed Jan. 15, 2018. <http://www.theodore-roosevelt.com/images/research/txtspeeches/513.txt>



But their chief spokesman, Cornstalk, while obliged to assent to these conditions, yet preserved through all the proceedings a bearing of proud defiance that showed how little the fear of personal consequences influenced his own actions. At the talks he addressed the white leader with vehement denunciation and reproach, in a tone that seemed rather that of a conqueror than one of the conquered.

Roosevelt understood, as a young man just out of college, the pride of the Native Americans and their toughness to fight submission to the whites, yet when he entered the political arena, his beliefs about inferior races submitting to superior races took hold over him. As President, he felt the Native Americans were given a great gift when he allowed them to be assimilated into such a great nation and the superior Anglo-American race. He saw value in American culture, which had so many modern conveniences, especially when compared to the Native American culture.

Roosevelt believed all people wanted to live in modern comfort and would rather have the luxuries provided by the industrialization of America, while still being able to visit the wild areas of the west to hunt and have physical activity. He saw the Native Americans who refused to assimilate and become part of his Anglo-American race as so primitive that they did not understand what they refused. If they chose to stay on reservations under primitive conditions and refused individual ownership of land, then they were too inferior to be part of American culture and therefore would need a parent figure to take care of them.

As President, Roosevelt felt he acted in the best interests of the Native Americans when he sought for Native Americans to be justly compensated for their land, wanting them to become productive occupiers of land; worked with activists to protect Native American Rights, and launched investigations into the conditions of Native Americans on reservations. His belief was that as President of the United States, he was responsible for all those who lived in his country. It was his belief, which was a major part of the Progressive Movement as well, that it did not

matter what those inferior races believed to be correct, it only mattered what the superior race “knew” to be correct. They “knew” how to create the best culture, government, and economy so all others must strive to live as they did, but those “others” did not want what the Progressives were forcing on them.



Figure 5: Apache Children on arrival (top) and 4 months after at the Carlisle Indian School (bottom)<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> “Remembering Our Indian School Days: The Boarding School Experience.” Heard Museum. Accessed January 21, 2018. <http://heard.org/exhibits/boarding/school/>.

## Chapter 6: Roosevelt the President, Parenting the Native Americans

By viewing the Native Americans as inferior or as child-like, Roosevelt saw it as his duty to ensure they were taken care of and protected. To that end, when he heard that Native Americans were not being treated fairly or were being taken advantage of, he acted on their behalf. Roosevelt received information on the situations that were affecting the Native Americans from members of his cabinet as well as from activists. One member of his cabinet that relayed information to Roosevelt was Secretary of Interior, Ethan Allen Hitchcock, who stated in a letter, "...as it reveals the real situation, namely, that a number of white squaw men and a few of the leading Indians are practically robbing the remainder of the tribe or band, of their property."<sup>1</sup> Roosevelt was convinced through Hitchcock's information that the investigations of the reservations were needed to ensure there was no corruption or other wrongdoings involved.

Charles Fletcher Lummis was one of the activists who were helpful to Roosevelt both by informing him of the corruption as well as by updating him on the progress of investigations that happened on the reservations in the Southwest. Through Lummis, Roosevelt took positive steps to curb abuses, but ironically these actions were still rooted in a sense of cultural and racial superiority, rather than equality. Lummis was a journalist and Indian rights and historical preservation activist, "Lummis devoted his personal and professional life to educating Americans about the lives, history, traditions, and beliefs of the peoples of the Southwest, particularly the Pueblo Indians and Hispanic Americans."<sup>2</sup> Lummis was also a part of the creation of the

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<sup>1</sup> *Letter from Ethan Allen Hitchcock to Theodore Roosevelt*, Theodore Roosevelt Papers, Library of Congress Manuscript Division. Accessed Jan. 14, 2018. <http://www.theodorrerooseveltcenter.org/Research/Digital-Library/Record?libID=o41106>. Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library. Dickinson State University.

<sup>2</sup> Pamela Gerardi, "Charles Fletcher Lummis Southwest Portraits," *Peabody Museum*, 2018, Accessed Jan. 21, 2018, <https://www.peabody.harvard.edu/166>

Sequoia League, an organization that sought to “...make new better Indians and better-treated ones...”<sup>3</sup> It was through magazine articles that Lummis introduced the Sequoia League and presented the mistreatment of the Pueblo Indians: “*Out West*, formerly *The Land of Sunshine*, edited by Lummis was chosen the official organ of the new League. The Sequoia League ‘To Make Better Indians,’ appears for the first time in the March number of the official publication...The society was named for the famed Cherokee Indian, Sequoia, inventor of the Cherokee alphabet.”<sup>4</sup> The Sequoia League and Lummis reported on how the Pueblo Indians were treated and worked with Roosevelt to investigate the oppression that happened in the American Southwest.

Roosevelt learned from Lummis about the conditions and mistreatment of the Moquis (Hopi) Indians by Charles E. Burton, Superintendent and Special Distributing Agent of the Moquis and Navajos at Keam’s Canon, Arizona. As discussed by Francis E. Watkins, “By January, 1902, Lummis had secured his objective. Not only that, but he had taken the memorial east, had had a personal interview with President Theodore Roosevelt in the course of which he had obtained the cooperation of the Chief Executive, and had seen the investigation of the Indian situation well on its way.”<sup>5</sup> The mistreatment was discussed by Lummis in a letter to Roosevelt on Sept. 26, 1903 on The Sequoia League letterhead:

But I also realize, my dear Chief, what seem to me the larger and the structural facts. For practically his whole term (some four years) Burton has kept the Oraibi school in the hands of three successive brutes. Vorhies was, indeed dismissed by Inspector Wright—against the efforts of Burton, who (as was proved at the investigation) made trouble for the teacher that obeyed the Inspector’s request and secured part of the evidence on which Vorhies was dismissed the Service. But it is solely to us that the Department dismissed Kampmeyer from the Service, and

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<sup>3</sup> Frances E. Watkins, “Charles F. Lummis and the Sequoia League,” *The Quarterly: Historical Society of Southern California*, 26, No. 2/3, (June-Sept.: 1944), 105. Accessed Jan. 21, 2018, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41168959>

<sup>4</sup> Watkins, “Charles F. Lummis and the Sequoia League,” 107.

<sup>5</sup> Watkins, “Charles F. Lummis and the Sequoia League,” 105.

“denotes” Ballenger to a job only half as remunerative. It is due to us only that the Department reprimands Burton himself on three separate counts. Further than this, we have at last (after 18 months) secured from the Department an official death-blow to Commissioner Jones’s famous “Hair-Cut Order”—which all this time has gone on (though in fact disemboweled by Mr. Jones, when practically every newspaper in the country had “had fun with it”) a good enough authority for any agent fool enough to take it as it was meant.<sup>6</sup>

Lummis pointed out to Roosevelt the problems that Lummis had with Burton as the superintendent of the Hopi Indian reservation.

After Roosevelt learned about the oppressive treatment of the Hopi Indians in Arizona, his decision was shown in a letter to Secretary Hitchcock where he stated, “I think Burton should be removed immediately.”<sup>7</sup> In response to the actions taken by the Bureau of Indian Affairs in relation to the Moqui investigation, The Sequoya League released an article in their magazine that they were satisfied with the findings. They go on to state, “Its object in calling for an investigation was to enable the Department to discover shameful abuses that have been going on for about four years in this remote corner of its jurisdiction, and to set them right. Enough have been discovered and set right to make a radical change at Moqui.”<sup>8</sup> The Sequoya League and Lummis were excited that Roosevelt was indeed a man of his word and followed through to improve the conditions of the reservation.

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<sup>6</sup> *Letter from Charles Fletcher Lummis to Theodore Roosevelt*, Theodore Roosevelt Papers, Library of Congress Manuscript Division. Accessed Jan. 21, 2018. <http://www.theodoreroosevelt.org/Research/Digital-Library/Record?libID=o42310>. Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library. Dickinson State University.

<sup>7</sup> *Letter from Theodore Roosevelt to Ethan Allen Hitchcock*, Theodore Roosevelt Papers, Library of Congress Manuscript Division. Accessed Jan. 21, 2018. <http://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/Research/Digital-Library/Record?libID=o185154> Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library. Dickinson State University.

<sup>8</sup> *Moqui Investigation*, Theodore Roosevelt Papers. Library of Congress Manuscript Division. Accessed Jan. 21, 2018. <http://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/Research/Digital-Library/Record?libID=o42509>. Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library. Dickinson State University.

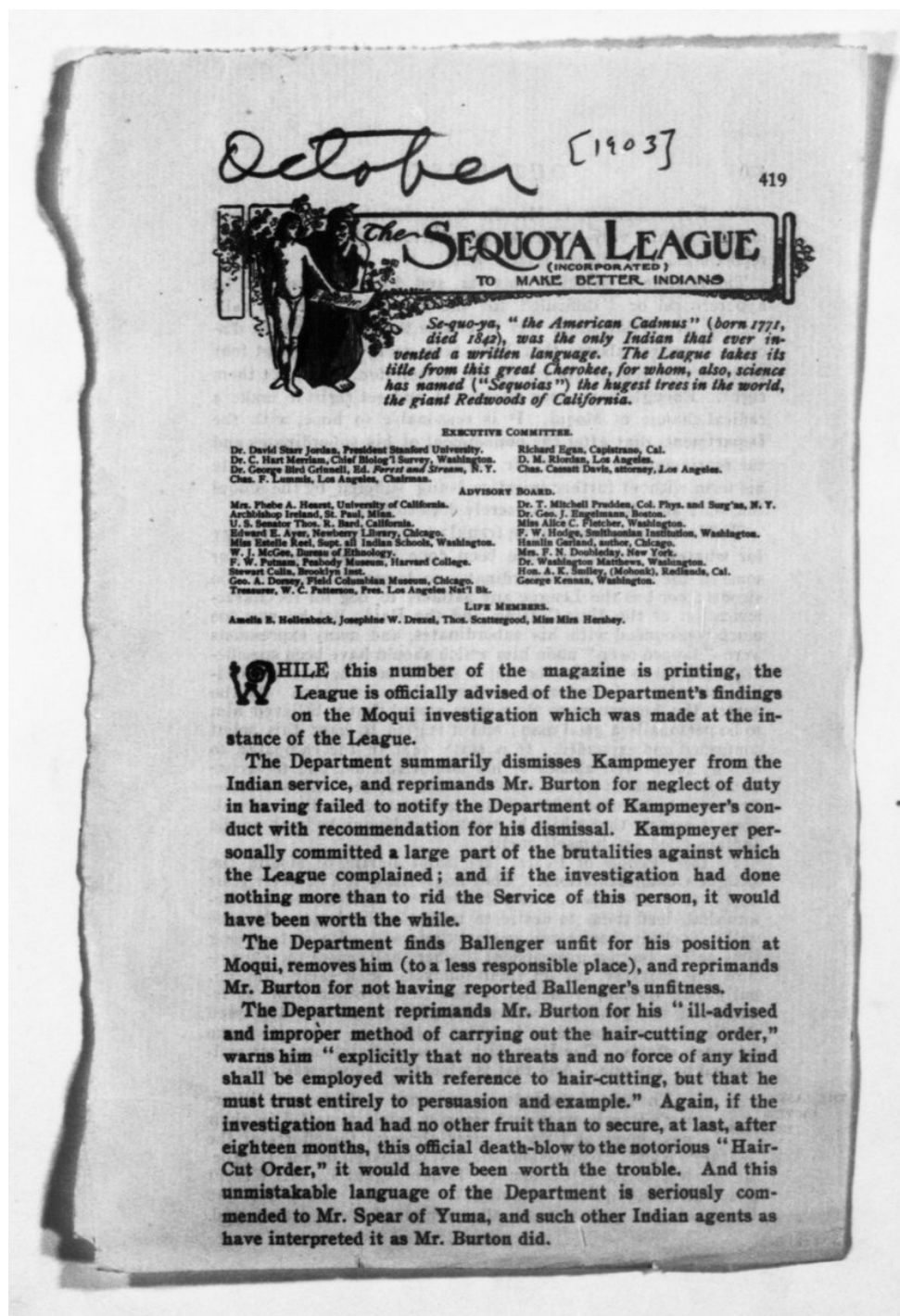


Figure 6: The Sequoya League: Moqui Investigation Letter<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> *Moqui investigation*, Theodore Roosevelt Papers, Library of Congress Manuscript Division. Accessed on Jan. 21, 2018. <http://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/Research/Digital-Library/Record?libID=o42509>. Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library. Dickinson State University.

Roosevelt learned from the situation in Arizona and decided that those responsible for overseeing Native Americans, on other reservations, needed to be watched to eliminate corruption as well as to check on Native Americans' progress. Roosevelt sent a letter to Secretary of Interior Hitchcock with directions for the reservations:

Direct the Indian agents and bounded superintendents in California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico and Colorado to report to Mead as General Supervisor on the first of every month as to the industrial condition of the Indians, and their proposed industrial plan for the coming summer, and then as to the progress from month to month on the several reservations...Then after the notification has been sent, order the General Supervisor to visit the reservations in the States and Territories mentioned, so that by the end of the season he can report to the department in full as to the general conditions and industrial progress, and make such recommendations as may seem necessary.<sup>10</sup>

The implication in the direction from Roosevelt was to maintain that the Native Americans were not abused, while at the same time check on their status to measure the progress they were making towards assimilation. Roosevelt gave similar directions for the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota:

I direct that your office be ordered a year hence to make a full and thorough report on this Rosebud Reservation, which has just been thrown open, giving the history of all owners, so as to show what land has been taken for settlement; what land has not been taken; and how much of that which has been taken is occupied by actual homesteaders – by men who are living on the land and cultivating it. I would like this report made as full as possible.<sup>11</sup>

So, Roosevelt wanted to ensure the protection and wellbeing of the Native Americans on the reservations but held out hope that they would still eventually assimilate into American culture.

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<sup>10</sup> *Letter from Theodore Roosevelt to Ethan Allen Hitchcock*, Theodore Roosevelt Papers, Library of Congress Manuscript Division. Accessed Jan. 21, 2018. <http://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/Research/Digital-Library/Record?libID=o188671>. Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library. Dickinson State University.

<sup>11</sup> *Letter from Theodore Roosevelt to William A. Richards*, Theodore Roosevelt Papers, Library of Congress Manuscript Division. Accessed on Jan. 21, 2018. <http://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/Research/Digital-Library/Record?libID=o188851>. Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library. Dickinson State University.

The issue of land was another important instance when Roosevelt felt the need to watch out for the interests of Native Americans to ensure they did not lose land from their reservations through fraudulent methods. The Rosebud Reservation was an example of his concern and his belief that a successful resolution was made. In a letter to Senator Robert J. Gamble, Roosevelt explained:

I cordially agree with the policy of opening the Indian reservations to bona fide settlers so far as is compatible with reserving for the Indians the lands they themselves need for agricultural or pastoral purposes, and on condition that for the surplus lands they get adequate payment. But I am not satisfied that the provisions of the present bill, as I understand them, give sufficient price to the Indians. Ample care must be taken to see that the Indians get the money without question, that the settlers pay it, and that there is no chance for the Indian to be defrauded by deferring of payment or in any other way getting out of making them.<sup>12</sup>

After around two months, Roosevelt would discuss in another letter to Matthew Stanley Quay how he believed raising the price of the land on the Rosebud Reservation from three dollars to four dollars was enough.<sup>13</sup> He felt that if the Native Americans were not using the land, then making money off the land was positive, but only if they were paid what the land was worth and if the whites were not taking advantage of them.

Roosevelt felt the Native Americans were inferior and needed to have someone responsible for looking after them, which is clearly shown in a letter he wrote to his son Kermit on January 26, 1907: “The poor Tartar tribe: Such a shabby, pathetic helplessly inefficient and wrong-headed Tartar tribe, quite unable to profit by kindness; and such easy victims of tyranny!

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<sup>12</sup> *Letter from Theodore Roosevelt to Robert J. Gamble*, Theodore Roosevelt Papers, Library of Congress Manuscript Division, Accessed on Jan. 21, 2018. <http://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/Research/Digital-Library/Record?libID=o187404>. Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library. Dickinson State University.

<sup>13</sup> *Letter from Theodore Roosevelt to Matthew Stanley Quay*, Theodore Roosevelt Papers, Library of Congress Manuscript Division, Accessed on Jan. 21, 2018. <http://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/Research/Digital-Library/Record?libID=o187979>. Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library. Dickinson State University.



I have done the best I could for them.”<sup>14</sup> A clearer example of Roosevelt’s feelings could not be shown; he discussed how “pathetic” the Natives were and how they could not “profit by kindness,” which hinted at his belief that offering assimilation to the Native Americans was kind. His statement that he did the best he could referred to his attempt to assimilate them as well as to his attempts to ensure that they were justly compensated for the land whites bought from them.

Roosevelt mentioned multiple times and in multiple places that he ensured that the Native Americans received proper payment for land. He almost came across as bragging about his success in his autobiography:

On one occasion, for example, Congress passed a bill to sell to settlers about half a million acres of Indian land in Oklahoma at one and a half dollars an acre. I refused to sign it, and turned the matter over to Leupp. The bill was accordingly withdrawn, amended so as to safeguard the welfare of the Indians, and the minimum price was raised to five dollars an acre. Then I signed the bill. We sold that land under sealed bids, and realized for the Kiowa, Comanche, and Apache Indians more than four million dollars—three millions and a quarter more than they would have obtained if I had signed the bill in its original form.<sup>15</sup>

It was an improvement of over three million dollars for the tribes, which as Roosevelt saw it was successfully ensuring the Native Americans rights. What Roosevelt neglected to mention in his excitement over successfully raising the price for the Native Americans was that the use of American money was another part of assimilation. Native Americans living on those reservations had no need of money; they did not use money as they lived in an agricultural economy. The money raised from the sale of the tribe’s reservation land went to the government

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<sup>14</sup> *Letter from Theodore Roosevelt to Kermit Roosevelt*, Theodore Roosevelt Collection, MS Am 1541 (174), Harvard College Library. Accessed on Jan. 21, 2018. <http://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/Research/Digital-Library/Record?libID=o280858>. Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library. Dickinson State University.

<sup>15</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, *Theodore Roosevelt: An Autobiography*, (Auckland: The Floating Press, 2014), 388. Accessed Jan. 5, 2018. <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.snhu.edu/lib/snhu-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1706584>.

to pay for the supplies or necessities for Native Americans; it was not directly given to the Native Americans.

If the money had been given to the Native Americans, they still would not have had a use for it as they were not part of American culture. The use of money, especially U.S. dollars, was not part of the Native American culture; they refused to be part of that culture and attempted to live on the land forced on them by the government as they had for hundreds of years: farming, hunting and raising animals. The attempt Roosevelt made to care for and parent Native Americans, although noble in his eyes and the Progressives' eyes at the time, was still very much a part of the assimilation process. He viewed it as his responsibility to protect and educate the inferior Native Americans, but like many parents who want what is best for their children, he missed what the children wanted for themselves.

## Conclusion

When investigating such a dynamic and charismatic historical character as Theodore Roosevelt, a historian has the job of reporting his actions and experiences without judgement. Some historians, like James Bradley, have characterized him as a racist while other historians, like Jack Beatty, portrayed him as a champion of the people over big business. Bradley discussed how Roosevelt's Aryan/Teuton/Anglo-Saxon flow of civilization moving west from Germany, through England to America began while he was a young boy and continued while he was in college.<sup>1</sup> Other historians, like Jack Beatty, described Roosevelt as a champion of the urban middle-class through the Progressive Movement where he brought reform to the nation.<sup>2</sup> These two different views have created extreme perspectives of Roosevelt from an oversimplification of the character of Theodore Roosevelt, when proper analysis showed his progressive nature and racist beliefs were strong parts of his character. Roosevelt's Anglo-Saxon beliefs mixed with his religious beliefs and created a political character who thought a superior race was destined to conquer the world and parent the inferior races while they educated them in culture and self-government as Roosevelt did with the Native Americans.

Theodore Roosevelt learned his Anglo-Saxon superior race views as a child, then had them reinforced as a student at Harvard and Columbia Law Schools, and finally his views morphed into a new Anglo-American superior race belief. As he learned and altered his view, he saw an opportunity for what were known as inferior races to become assimilated into the superior race. The different political positions held throughout his life educated him and led to

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<sup>1</sup> James Bradley, *The Imperial Cruise: A Secret History of Empire and War*, (New York, NY: Back Bay Books, 2009), 34-35.

<sup>2</sup> Jack Beatty, *Age of Betrayal: The Triumph of Money in America, 1865-1900*, (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 2007), 377.

his decision to alter his belief from an Anglo-Saxon superior race to his Anglo-American superior race. His political positions gave him the opportunity to practice his belief in caring for those inferior races that were wards of the United States. The Native Americans fell under his inferior race beliefs, so he felt they needed to be educated and assimilated into American culture where they could become part of his Anglo-American race. For those Native Americans who refused to assimilate, his only option became to care for them as they were so inferior that the U.S. government would need to protect them and make decisions on their behalf as though it were a parental relationship.

The same teachings, from his father and while he studied in college, that led to Roosevelt's Anglo-American superiority also created his beliefs that fueled his progressive reforms when he entered the political arena and dedicated his life to public service. His father's teachings on Christian piety by his father were instrumental in Roosevelt's belief that those who are able have a responsibility to protect and care for those who are not able. As a superior Anglo-Saxon holding a leadership role, he had a duty to act in a morally just way when representing his constituents. It was his belief that the superior Anglo-American race was responsible for all those inferior groups under its charge, which directed him to become a reformer who ensured that those with so much success in business did not abuse those who were not as successful. Native Americans, in Roosevelt's view, were both inferior and in dire need of a leader to watch out for their interest.

Native Americans were viewed as primitive and, at times throughout American history, even savage in the eyes of Anglo-Americans and Roosevelt. Roosevelt saw the Native Americans as an inferior group within the United States that struggled to assimilate, and because of that, they needed the United States government to ensure they were protected and looked

after. He wrote letters about how great it was that the Indian agents were temporarily leasing reservation land to white cattlemen for grazing animals which created an income for the Indians living on the Standing Rock Reservation in South Dakota.<sup>3</sup> Roosevelt thought that the Native Americans would assimilate so they could become part of his successful Anglo-American culture, so when some refused to assimilate and remained on reservations, he interpreted that as another sign of their inferiority and determined they were so inferior they needed forced assimilation to be educated to understand how much better Anglo-American culture was to their primitive one. His progressive views were in line with his Anglo-American superiority and his piety upbringing and were why he viewed the Native Americans as an inferior race that needed to be protected until they could be educated and assimilated.

During the years that Roosevelt spent in many different positions as a public servant in the State of New York he pushed reform in the political structure as well as the need to protect and educate the inferior Native Americans. While he was a New York State Representative, he pushed Civil Service Reform to ensure there was fair play in who was selected to work for the government of New York City. As Commissioner and President of the New York City Police Board, there were instances that showed his ideas about how race was responsible for the actions of people. Then as Governor of New York, he acted, in his view, in the best interest of Native Americans within his state, to educate and assimilate them into the American culture. His two biggest pushes were for individual ownership of land by the Native Americans and for their children to be educated in “white ways” so they would take another step toward assimilation and

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<sup>3</sup> *Letter from Theodore Roosevelt to Ethan Allen Hitchcock*, Theodore Roosevelt Papers, Library of Congress Manuscript Division. Accessed Dec. 2, 2017. <http://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/Research/Digital-Library/Record?lobID=0181338>. Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library. Dickinson State University.

become part of his Anglo-American race. Laurence M. Hauptman described how Roosevelt wanted to educate the Indians' youth through exposure to white America and also get the adult Indians to move from tribal ownership of land to individual ownership of land.<sup>4</sup> Roosevelt saw the assimilation of Native Americans as the best solution for both whites and Native Americans, and he would bring this view with him to the national level of government in the United States.

Roosevelt brought his beliefs about Native Americans assimilating with him to the national political level and put those ideas into action. As a United States Civil Service Commissioner, Roosevelt continued the use of forced assimilation on Native Americans on reservations. Roosevelt attempted to have those Native Americans he thought of as "civilized" act as the model for the rest of their tribes. He explained this idea in a letter to Joseph Gilbert Thorp, Jr., saying that the civilized Natives who were paid to be Indian judges and Indian police were symbols for the rest of their tribes.<sup>5</sup> He also continued to push for the education of the Native American youth as he had started to do while in the New York government. He led the investigation of the reservation system to eliminate the corruption that had taken place by the white agents who were supposed to look out for the best interests of the Native Americans. He viewed it as his job as the President of the United States to protect all the people under his leadership, which included the Native Americans. President Roosevelt worked to make sure the Native Americans were compensated for their land and able to become productive occupiers of their land; he worked with activists to protect Native American rights and launched investigations to ensure the conditions on the reservations were not oppressive.

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<sup>4</sup> Laurence M. Hauptman, "Governor Theodore Roosevelt and the Indians of New York State," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 119, No. 1, (Feb. 21, 1975), 1. Accessed on Sept. 25, 2017. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/986645>

<sup>5</sup> Elting E. Morison, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt Vol 1*, (Universal Digital Library: Harvard University Press, 1951), 238. Accessed Jan. 14, 2018. <https://archive.org/details/lettersoftheodo00691mbp>

President Roosevelt saw the Native Americans as inferior and almost child-like compared to his Anglo-American race, so it became his duty to ensure they were taken care of and protected. Members of his cabinet and activists relayed information to Roosevelt about the conditions and corruption that took place on the reservations, which convinced him to launch investigations. Through the investigations Roosevelt learned of the corruption and then acted to remove those responsible and to end the abuse that some Native Americans experienced. He also ensured that upstanding individuals oversaw the reservations and that the status of the Native Americans was reported back to him. He took advantage of having individuals reporting the status of the reservations to not only ensure there was no corruption or abuse, but also be updated on assimilation progress. Roosevelt famously argued with Congress over the amount paid to the Natives for land use or purchase and was able to successfully increase the amount of money given to the Native Americans. However, the Native Americans living on reservations had no real need for United States dollars.

Native Americans who had chosen to stay on reservations did not have any need for money as it was not part of their culture; it was part of American culture. This was another attempt by Roosevelt to force assimilation on Native Americans, another way to bring them into his Anglo-American culture by educating them in how to earn and spend money. In Roosevelt's mind and Progressives' minds, they were educating inferior Native Americans to better their lives and teaching them how the modern world operated. The problem was Native Americans did not want to be part of that world and did not care to learn how it operated. They had their own form of self-government, even if in Roosevelt's mind it was considered primitive, it was how they wanted to be governed. In the letter to his son, Kermit, he explained his true ideas of Native Americans when he said they were "...shabby, pathetic helplessly inefficient and wrong-

headed...such easy victims of tyranny!"<sup>6</sup> He did not understand the Native Americans or their way of life, yet because of his education both as a youth and in college, he filed them away in his mind as inferior and in need of help. It would be easy to label Roosevelt as a racist, as by today's standards, many of the Progressives from the turn of the century would meet the criteria, but he did not act out of hate; he thought he was acting in the best interests of those he represented.

This more holistic portrait of Theodore Roosevelt has revealed that he was neither the heroic champion of the people nor the racist imperialist, as characterized by prior historical accounts. Instead, he was a flawed person whose racial beliefs caused him to be both condescending and compassionate, to do great damage and great good. Furthermore, this re-examination is valuable not only because it helps to unify the Roosevelt historiography, but also because of the way in which Roosevelt's experiences and beliefs illuminate and clarify the nature of the Progressive Movement itself.

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<sup>6</sup> *Letter from Theodore Roosevelt to Kermit Roosevelt*, Theodore Roosevelt Collection, MS Am 1541 (174), Harvard College Library. Accessed on Jan. 21, 2018. <http://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/Research/Digital-Library/Record?libID=o280858>. Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library. Dickinson State University.





**Figure 7: President Theodore Roosevelt<sup>7</sup>**

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<sup>7</sup> Frances Benjamin Johnston, photographer. *Theodore Roosevelt, Pres. U.S., 1858-1919.*, 1902. Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, Accessed Jan. 21, 2018. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2002710496/>.

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